
Istanbul: tales from the players + Simon Mignolet + 1965 FA Cup kings + Suarez & Torres
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LIVERPOOL FC
official liverpool fc monthly magazine
liverpool fc.com
Standard Chartered
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9 771478 304143
ISSUE 034 £3.95
The skipper's exclusive farewell message for the fans
STEVEN GERRARD











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Issue 34 June 2015



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1 NEW KIT – BIG HIT

More than 1,000 fans were at Anfield for the first glimpse of Liverpool FC's 2015/16 home kit, produced by New Balance. Reds quartet Simon Mignolet, Martin Skrtel, Raheem Sterling and Daniel Sturridge stepped out in the strip at the special event, and skipper Jordan Henderson is definitely a fan: "Our fans create a great atmosphere at Anfield and it is brilliant to have a kit that reflects the red-and-white mosaic made when the Kop hold their flags and scarves aloft."

Meanwhile main sponsor Standard Chartered has renewed its LFC partnership to the end of 2018/19. Club chief commercial officer Billy Hogan says: "The sponsorship of the Liverpool shirt is extremely prestigious and only five brands will have adorned it in the 40 years. At the end of this term we will have been working with Standard Charted for almost a decade and we continue to collaborate on our shared values, passion and commitment to the community."





2 THE RED CARPET

There was a glittering event at the Liverpool Hilton following the All-Star Charity Match at Anfield in April. Among those who attended the formal dinner at the city-centre hotel were Steven Gerrard, and Fernando Torres, and both the skipper and the former Reds striker took time to speak to LFCTV about the occasion, the good causes set to benefit, and for 'El Nino' particularly what it felt like to hear the Kop sing his name again! A picture-special from the game itself begins on page 24.





POINTS CLEAR

Liverpool's new look gets the thumbs-up; stars reflect on special day; fun run celebrates 96



3 WINNING RUN

Almost 2,500 walkers, joggers and runners took part in the inaugural Run For The 96 in April. Among the famous faces on the 5k run were singer Melanie C, actor and comedian Les Dennis, politician Andy Burnham, former players Alan Kennedy, Graham Stuart and John Durnin, impressionist Darren Farley, the 'voice of Anfield' George Sephton and actor Kurtis Stacey.

The new community legacy fun-run started and finished in Stanley Park, a fitting location between Anfield and Goodison Park. The aim was to celebrate the lives of the 96, and to remember their families and the survivors of Hillsborough. Everyone taking part was encouraged to wear a specially designed red or blue T-shirt, and there was a minute's applause for the 96 before Hillsborough Family Support Group chair Margaret Aspinall officially started the run.






Presented by
The Professional Footballers' Association
to Steven Gerrard MBE
for your outstanding contribution
to professional football
26 April 2015

“I’VE LIVED MY LIFE FOR LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB. IT’S BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO CAPTAIN OUR CLUB & I’VE LOVED WEARING THE ARMBAND. AT THE SAME TIME IT WILL BE NICE TO STEP AWAY FROM THAT INTENSITY & TAKE A DEEP BREATH”

Steven Gerrard: frank and from the heart…



Has it sunk in that your Liverpool FC career is now drawing to a close?

No, not at all. I've got mixed emotions about it right now. It's exciting to know I will be trying something different, playing in another league and getting to see a lot of a great country like America. At the same time I'm emotional and I know these final few weeks will be tough. It's going to be difficult to let go. My relationship with Liverpool doesn't end though. I'm hoping I'll return to the club in some capacity one day. If that's not to be, then I'll always come back as a supporter.

From Merseyside to Los Angeles is a massive change – is that part of what appealed about the move?

Definitely. I've lived in Liverpool all of my life. I'm coming up to the age of 35 now and I'm in the fortunate position where I can give my family a completely new experience. I can withdraw from Liverpool FC for a while and look in on it.

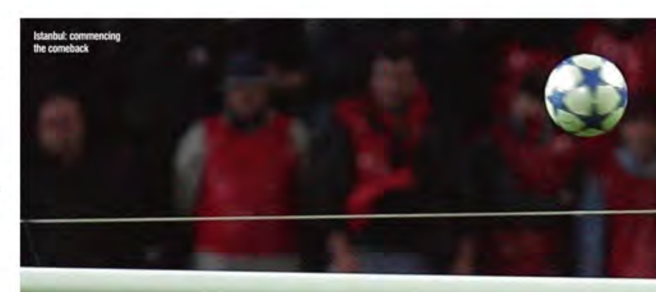
I think it's a fantastic opportunity. I didn't feel I'd enjoy it as much at Liverpool if I became a squad player or a bit-part player. I still have the same attitude and hunger that I've always had. I want to play games from the start and win. I still want to challenge for honours. All of that combined means LA Galaxy is the ideal place for the next part of my career.

I spoke to Robbie Keane, David Beckham and Thierry Henry about the MLS as they've obviously experienced it. They gave me plenty of information. They told me the nice things about the league and mentioned some of the elements I might find challenging. What they said certainly helped me to decide on America.

You've played over 700 games for the club – how do you differ now from the boy who made his debut in November 1998?

I don't think that I've changed too much as a person. I've obviously changed physically, but my love for the club and what I think of the fans is still the same. That's why I'll still be putting in exactly the same effort over the last few weeks and days up until the last minute of the final game I play in.

"I still have the same hunger that I've always had – I still want to win trophies"



Istanbul: commencing the comeback

Entering the first team set-up as a teenager all those years ago must have been intimidating…

Very. It's a huge step in your career. Suddenly you've jumped from under-age football to the big pond. When you are a young lad and you go in to the senior dressing-room it is full of big personalities and big players. Many of them were guys I'd watched from the terraces and looked up to. They were my heroes.

So when you enter that environment you are shy initially. It takes time to settle, come out of your shell and express yourself. It also takes a while for everyone else to get used to you and what you are like. I was lucky because I had seven or eight English lads who all put their arm around me. I'd been full-time at the club for a few years before then so I knew them quite well.

But you can't really feel comfortable in the presence of established players until you put in some good performances and earn their respect. There are 20 or 25 lads all watching and waiting to see what you are capable of at that level. You have to show them on a daily basis in training that you belong there and are able to help the team win.

Really, it's sink-or-swim time. You either stay in your shell or express yourself. Thankfully I was able to do that. I know it's not easy. That's why I always try to help the young lads who





Happy days with
Fernando Torres


LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
Carlsberg

come to Melwood to train. I let them know that I'm there for them and if they need any advice or help to just ask for it.

You had to get past some talented individuals to earn a place in Gerard Houllier's side…

Paul Ince, Jamie Redknapp and a few others were ahead of me. The only thing on my mind was to take a position in the team from people who thought it was theirs. I wanted to do everything in my power to make that happen whether they liked it or not.

I don't mean that in a nasty or bad way. Paul and Jamie are friends and former team-mates who I've got the utmost respect for. But they had something I wanted and had wanted for a long time. So I used to go in to work every morning determined to show the manager and staff that I was capable of claiming one of those positions.

I think the majority of players work hard. What maybe made me different was I wanted it so much. I was prepared to do anything to get in to the Liverpool first team. I didn't want anyone to get there ahead of me or take my place once I got in the side.

How much of making it in football is about application?

I think working hard should be a given. Whenever you are asked to go to Liverpool, at whatever age, things like desire, commitment, working hard and a good attitude should be part of who you are. Nobody should need to be told to improve in those areas. It should be in your DNA.

How has the dressing-room atmosphere changed during your years in the first team?

It definitely has changed. There have been times when there weren't enough English or British lads in the dressing-room. I think people could see that. At the moment it definitely isn't the case. Brendan Rodgers deserves a lot of credit because he wants an English core. He wants British players who know what the club is all about. Then he tries to add quality foreign lads into that. I believe it's the correct approach.

The dressing-room banter is a bit different for me now. When I first came into the squad I was a young lad and used to be involved in some of it. Now I'm almost like a grandad in there. I stay in the background a lot and just pop my head in from time to time.

With Carra gone and you about to leave, the Scouse presence in the side has been reduced…

"The local talent is there at the Academy – people just have to be patient"

I think we'll be fine on that front. Carra left a few years ago, I'm about to, and Flano has been injured. So it's understandable that people are asking questions about having a Scouser in the team. The local talent is certainly there at the Academy. People just have to be patient because it takes time to come through.

I think we've almost been spoilt for local lads in the team in recent times with guys like Fowler, McManaman, Carra, myself, Thompson, Kelly, Spearing, Darby, Mellor, Warnock and Flano. It might not always be there in such large numbers, but I think it will be there. I'm down at the Academy quite a lot and I know they are doing a great job and working unbelievably hard.

Just as importantly, if you are good enough the manager will certainly put you in. He's already shown that with Raheem Sterling and Jordon Ibe.

Does the buzz of playing football stay the same as you progress from a kid to an established international?

No. It changes completely. When you are a kid growing up, it's a hobby. It's fun, and results – as much as you think they matter at the time – don't really matter. It's more about learning and developing.

When you come into the first-team environment it's all about the results. It's all about trying to win. I'm not saying the enjoyment disappears from the game, but it becomes an





Sharing a joke with Luis Suarez last season

awful lot more serious. The sense of responsibility and the pressure changes completely.

Football inevitably contains ups and downs – as you get older, does it get easier to deal with those emotions?
The Premier League is of such a standard that the highs and lows will always be extreme. I think the downs of football are never easy to handle. When you are a winner and you love winning, defeat is very hard to take. It is never easy to accept.

With experience, you learn not to be too hard on yourself when the team loses. You start to understand and realise that you can't win every game or pick up silverware every season. You will have your good times and bad times.

We've had some unforgettable days, winning various trophies such as the Champions League and FA Cup. And we've had other times that were

"Football is about ups and downs – you learn to accept it and deal with it"

disappointing. You learn to accept it and deal with it and move on. But that initial feeling of a setback is the same no matter what age you are. It's tough. And the same applies to success: a good win or a trophy is always an amazing sensation. That's why you want to experience it again and again and why missing out on it hurts a lot.

Are the emotions involved in winning and losing even more extreme when you are a local lad and the captain?
Of course. Since I got in to the first team set-up nearly 17 years ago I've lived my life for Liverpool Football Club. I wake up every day wanting success just as much as the fans. I've been that way for an awful long time and it's been a privilege to captain our club. I've loved wearing the armband. At the same time it will be nice to step away from that intensity and take a deep breath. I'll be able to go and enjoy the remaining playing years of my career without that same level of pressure.

Is it really possible for you to switch off at all?
If I'm being honest, I probably haven't ever been able to switch off properly because Liverpool is my life. Even when I've had a day-off and tried to forget about it all, I just can't. I start



On target again

daydreaming about the next game or the next training session. I think as a local lad it's very difficult to stop thinking about your club. I'll walk out of my house and bump into fans on the street that understandably want to talk about the team or the next game. It is intense.

Having a family, especially all girls, has probably benefited me when it comes to getting away from football in some sort of way. I'm sure the lads who have little boys go home from training and then spend the afternoon kicking the ball around the back garden with their sons. So that is more football for them, whereas there is none of that with the girls. They help me to switch off as much as I can. They also help me to move on from the highs and lows pretty quickly. They are my priority. At the same time they know my job and the responsibility that comes with it.

Interview: John Hynes Exclusive photography by John Powell

Part of the intensity is obviously the media attention – how have you learned to deal with that?

By hitting the hang-up button on my phone when they call me for an



Advice for Flano

"I do see a coaching role in the future but right now I am still a player"

interview! No, I'm only joking. When you play for Liverpool the spotlight is on you. You have to learn to deal with it the best you can. The media play a big part in the game and they are needed. They can help you at times.

You also have to accept that criticism from the media will probably come your way at some point. As long as it's valid or constructive criticism I've never had a problem with that. Nobody likes being criticised but every player who has ever played will get it. That is part of the life of a footballer.

You do have to be on your guard when dealing with the media and make sure nobody is trying to stitch you up or twist your words. I think if you are respectful and honest in your dealings with the press, you will be okay.

The work of your foundation has obviously become very important to you…

It would be easy for people in my position to not help others or ignore the problems out there, but I wanted to do something to give a little back. It's my way of saying thanks to the city of Liverpool, which has always provided me with so much support. Setting up the charity is something I am very proud of because I know the money we raise goes to the right places and makes a difference to the people that really need it.

You recently had a taste of selecting a squad for the All Star Charity game – did it give you an insight to a managerial role?

I did enjoy that element of picking a team and discussing tactics and formations. I do see that kind of managerial or coaching role in my future at some stage, but not just yet. At the moment I am definitely a player for a few more years.

We saw Sami Hyypia shed a tear after his final Liverpool game in 2009 – do you think you will do the same?

I just don't know what is going to happen after my last game at Anfield against Crystal Palace. We'll have to wait and see. All I know is it will be a hugely emotional day for me when my Liverpool career comes to an end after so long.



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The Final 2005

Anfield's ALL-STARS

There was no first-team fixture at Anfield on Sunday 29 March but a full house was still present for the Liverpool All-Star Charity Match between two sides picked by Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher. With proceeds going to Liverpool FC Foundation and five nominated charities, the game ended 2-2.

Steven was on the scoresheet twice as his side, which included Luis Suarez, Fernando Torres and Xabi Alonso, fought back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Carra's team which scored through Mario Balotelli and Didier Drogba. The skipper called the day "absolutely magical. We know our supporters – when it's for a good cause they always come and support."

Former Reds striker Torres thanked the supporters for singing his famous song again: "It was very emotional," said the Atletico Madrid man. "I remember the song from the Kop in important games. To hear that once again is something I will never ever forget. Everybody knows Liverpool fans are different class."

Luis Suarez, team-mate on the day, added: "Everyone who's played for Liverpool knows how important the supporters are. Now they know they are in my heart." In turn Alonso admitted: "It felt like I'd come back home. When I left [for Real Madrid] I didn't have the chance to say a proper goodbye. Today was a kind of 'hello' to everyone – it was great to be back."








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Didi HAMANN

Steven Gerrard: an ordinary lad who's been utterly world-class



When I first arrived at Liverpool in 1999 everyone at the club was raving about this teenager who they felt was going to be superb. The consensus seemed to be that he was destined to have a big future.

At that stage Stevie had only played 13 games for the first team and I'd heard similar talk about others on numerous occasions at Bayern Munich. Most of them never made it.

Stevie was very raw then. He wanted to do everything: tackle, pass, burst forward, score goals and make goals. His potential was huge but that didn't guarantee anything. I was cautious about his prospects because you just never know what will happen in football or how a kid will develop as they get older.

Thankfully I didn't need to have any fears because what a player Stevie became. I think he improved year-on-year because he always wanted to get better. He never thought his game was complete. Being made captain by Gerard Houllier at the age of 23 was a really good call because it gave him even more motivation to continue working hard.

Some individuals who are ranked highly at an early age and receive plenty of praise go off the rails. They become flashy and start to believe all the good things people say about them. Stevie wasn't like that. He had a good family background and was brought up to be humble. He never thought he'd made it or behaved like he was a big star. All he wanted was to play football.

When I meet him now he's still the same down-to-earth guy – he hasn't changed. If you ask him about Istanbul his answer demonstrates that. Some people say he won the game single-handedly. He'll disagree, he'll point out that it was a superb team performance. It was a collective effort, but if you took Stevie out of the team during the time I was there then I'm certain we would not have won all the trophies we did. His contribution was so big, especially in the most important games, that to have been without it would have really damaged our chances.

"I played with Lothar Matthaus and I'd put Steven right up there with him"

He just had a gift for doing something decisive at crucial moments. Those pressure situations – such as the Olympiacos game in 2004/05 – are when you find out just how good someone really is. Time was running out and we needed something. That chance would have been hard to convert if you were 3-0 up and cruising, never mind still needing another goal to go through to the knockout stages. Yet he finished it in perfect fashion.



2006 FA Cup final: cometh the hour again

That's just one moment and there are obviously countless others. They are why, for me, he goes down as one of the all-time greats not just at Liverpool but in football in general. I've seen very few players who could make such an impact on the biggest games so consistently.

And it wasn't just with one method. He could put a half-volley away, score a header, make a vital tackle or earn a penalty. Whatever needed to be done he could produce it for the team.

I played with Lothar Matthaus at Bayern when he was getting towards the end of his career. He was an incredible player at his peak, a World Cup winner and almost unstoppable. I'd put Stevie up there alongside him and that is a superb tribute.

Follow Didi on Twitter @DietmarHamann

"Here's a little something to remember us by, Tommy – a wee cup final souvenir"

Next in our series celebrating half-a-century since Liverpool FC first won the FA Cup: a semi-final against much-fancied Chelsea...



The FA Cup had been Liverpool Football Club's great obsession since they had won their first top-flight league title in 1901. Landing the most coveted cup in domestic football had gained greater importance to the red half of Merseyside after Everton had secured successes in the competition in 1906 and 1933.

Following his appointment in the winter of 1959, manager Bill Shankly had made it a personal goal to end LFC's long wait for the silverware. It was a key policy-pledge in the Scot's Liverpool manifesto – delivering the trophy to Anfield was a promise he had made to himself and he was not a man of empty rhetoric.

In 1964/65 it was something of a balancing act for Shankly as he juggled the desire for glory on the home front with a wish to implement a flourishing foreign policy. The Reds were competing in the European Cup for the first time and faced a third tussle with Cologne in a quarter-final that was becoming an epic just three days before they took on Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-final at Villa Park.



Ron Yeats and co. head off to face FC Koln in Rotterdam in 1965

The FA Cup run had produced many twists and turns thus far. If captain Ron Yeats was to lift the trophy, he would do so having earlier picked up the ball in his own penalty area in the third-round tie at West Brom [having heard a whistle which actually came from the crowd – but the Baggies missed the spot-kick that followed]. His team had also needed replays to overcome the Football League's basement boys Stockport County in round four and Leicester City in round six, those wins book-ending a late fifth-round victory at Bolton Wanderers.

Before the semi-final however was that European Cup quarter-final second replay. Following goalless draws in L4 and Cologne, the third match was to be played at Feyenoord's stadium in Rotterdam. After goals from Ian St John and Roger Hunt were cancelled out by Karl-Heinz Thielen and Johanns Lohr, it was ruled that the outcome would be decided on the toss of a coin.

The drama continued after the original toss saw the coin lodge in a divot on the muddy pitch. Yeats suggested a re-toss and Belgian


Liverpool Echo

CHAMPIONS MARCH ON WEMBLEY


Action from Villa Park

referee Mr Schaut agreed. The Reds skipper later recalled: "I thought the German captain was going to hit him [the referee]. He was going berserk because it was falling over on the heads. He picked it up. Up it went again, came down tails. We were coming off and who is standing there but Bill Shankly. He went: 'Well done, big man, I am proud of you. What did you pick? I said: 'Tails, boss'. I was waiting for the adulation but he just went: 'Aye, I would have picked tails myself' and walked away."

It meant Liverpool had a European Cup semi-final against Inter Milan to look forward to, but Shankly's good mood didn't last long. First, he discovered that Yeats and St John had been invited to the hotel room of their fellow Scot, Tommy Docherty, who was manager of Chelsea. Next, he discovered that Docherty's club were so confident of success that they had already printed an FA Cup final souvenir brochure.

Chelsea's young and talented team had beaten Northampton, West Ham, Tottenham and Peterborough to reach this stage. With starlets such as Terry Venables and George Graham, they had grabbed headlines all season with their attacking style, and as the campaign entered its closing stages a domestic treble was a possibility. Chelsea went into the semi-final clash sitting joint-top of the First Division with Leeds United and were halfway through a two-legged League Cup final against Leicester City.

The Reds faced a third match with Cologne before the semi-final

Shanks and 'The Doc' went back some way. It was Tommy who had succeeded Bill in the no4 shirt at Preston North End. When Docherty asked for some advice ahead of his debut, Shankly is said to have responded: 'Just put the shirt on Tommy, it knows where to run'.

Once the Liverpool boss discovered Chelsea's brochure, however, there was only going to be one winner of this semi-final clash. Recalling the incident years later, Tommy Smith explained: "The boss came storming into the changing-room before the game and had with him some sort of brochure. He said: 'Take a look lads – they think they're already there. Go out and show them'. If any extra motivation was needed, that was it."

It was to be a good day for Smith. Over at Aintree that afternoon a jockey of the same name rode 100-6 shot Jay Trump to victory in the Grand National!

Liverpool had flown straight to their Birmingham base from Holland before two days' rest while Shankly and his staff conjured up a plan to beat the Londoners. For once, Liverpool set out to soak up pressure before hitting Chelsea once their young legs began to tire. Among other innovations introduced for the game was a lightweight playing shirt. The new tricks seemed to work. Liverpool made a bright start with St John squandering a good chance after goalkeeper Peter Bonetti had fumbled a strike from winger Peter Thompson.

As the pitch began to cut up, the game became scrappy. But Liverpool remained on top without managing to make a first-half breakthrough. They did have one scare however. Chelsea centre-back John Mortimore headed home an inswinging corner but was ruled to have fouled Reds keeper Tommy Lawrence in the process.



Nine minutes into the second period Gerry Byrne came closest to breaking the deadlock when he cut in from the left before firing in a fierce strike that beat Bonetti but struck the post.

Ten 10 minutes later Thompson, signed from Preston for a club-record £40,000 at the start of the season, grabbed the decisive goal. St John found him on the left flank with a raking pass and the wide man cut inside, beating defender Martin Hinton with a body-swerve, before unleashing a thunderous shot into the net.

He recalled: "I didn't score many, but I remember that goal. At the time there wasn't much between the two sides. The first goal was always going to be the all-important one and fortunately it fell to me. I got the ball out on the left wing. The Chelsea full-back backed off me, refusing to tackle and he had his wing-half inside for extra support. I didn't know what to do, to go on the outside or try cutting inside. Suddenly there was a yell for the ball and Gerry [Byrne] flew past me on an overlap.

"The wing-half moved across to take Gerry and that made up my mind. I took it inside, across the full-back, sped in for goal and thumped it from the edge of the penalty area. When I saw it flash past their keeper and go in by the near post I was the happiest man in England."

It was Thompson's fifth of the season and his first in the cup for Liverpool. As Chelsea pressed for an equaliser their best sight of goal fell to top scorer Graham but Smith snuffed out the danger. Shankly's side sensed a second strike would end Chelsea's ambitions. With 12 minutes remaining, Blues defender Ron 'Chopper' Harris fouled St John after the Reds forward had nudged the ball away from him in the area. Liverpool's problem was who would take the spot-kick. Since Ronnie Moran had lost his place in the side, they had no designated penalty-taker. Gorodn Milne had scored earlier in the season but was said to be reluctant to take the job on a permanent basis.

Willie Stevenson, who had never taken a penalty in a competitive game before, stepped up and dispatched his effort high into Bonetti's net. He later revealed he had intended to put his shot into the bottom corner but slipped and sent his strike higher than hoped. The travelling Kop didn't care and were soon in full voice with their anthem of 'Ee-Aye-Addio, We're going to win the Cup' ringing out around Villa Park.

The *Liverpool Echo* match report concluded that the players were in greater danger from fans pouring on to the pitch at the end of the game than they had been from the Chelsea team in the 90 minutes. Thompson was carried off shoulder-high.

The *Times* pondered: 'How was it that this team of virile youngsters, often criticised for running too much, suddenly became like old men whose legs would not carry them where they wanted to go? Liverpool, after their exertions in Rotterdam, had reason enough to look tired; but they did not. Instead, Chelsea wore the mantle of physical and mental fatigue'.


Liverpool Echo and Evening Express

Saturday, March 27, 1965

EE-AY-ADDIO THOMPSON SCORED THE GOAL!

Then Stevenson's Penalty Clinches It

LIVERPOOL 2 CHELSEA 0

The travelling Kop sang: 'Ee-aye-adio we're going to win the cup!'

And so, 15 years after losing their second FA Cup final, Liverpool were back at Wembley, hoping it would be third time lucky when they took on Don Revie's Leeds United. The *Daily Post* had shown exemplary powers of prediction on the morning of the game. Their sportswriter Horace Yates remarked: 'Outside Leeds and Liverpool there is almost unanimity in the prophecy that the FA Cup final on 1 May at Wembley will be contested by Manchester United and Chelsea. It is my opinion that on this occasion popular fancy will be confounded. My forecast is a Leeds v Liverpool final'.

David Peace's excellent novel *Red or Dead* signs off this episode with the following aprocryphal exchange between the two Scottish managers…

'Tommy Docherty looked down at the brochure. The Chelsea brochure for the FA Cup final. Tommy Docherty shook his head and said: 'What's this Bill? What on earth is this?'

'Just a wee souvenir for you,' said Bill Shankly. 'A little something for you to remember us by, Tommy. A Cup final souvenir.'

match facts & statistics

LIVERPOOL 2 CHELSEA 0
FA Cup semi-final 27.03.65
Villa Park

Goals: Thompson (63), Stevenson (79 pen)

Attendance: 67,686

Referee: DW Smith

Liverpool: Lawrence; Lawler, Byrne; Milne, Yeats, Stevenson; Callaghan, Hunt, St John, Smith; Thompson.

Chelsea: Bonetti; Hinton, McCreadie; Hollins, Mortimore, Harris, Murray, Graham, Bridges, Venables, Tambling.

The other semi-final result: Leeds United 0 Manchester United 0; Manchester United 0 Leeds United 1 (replay).

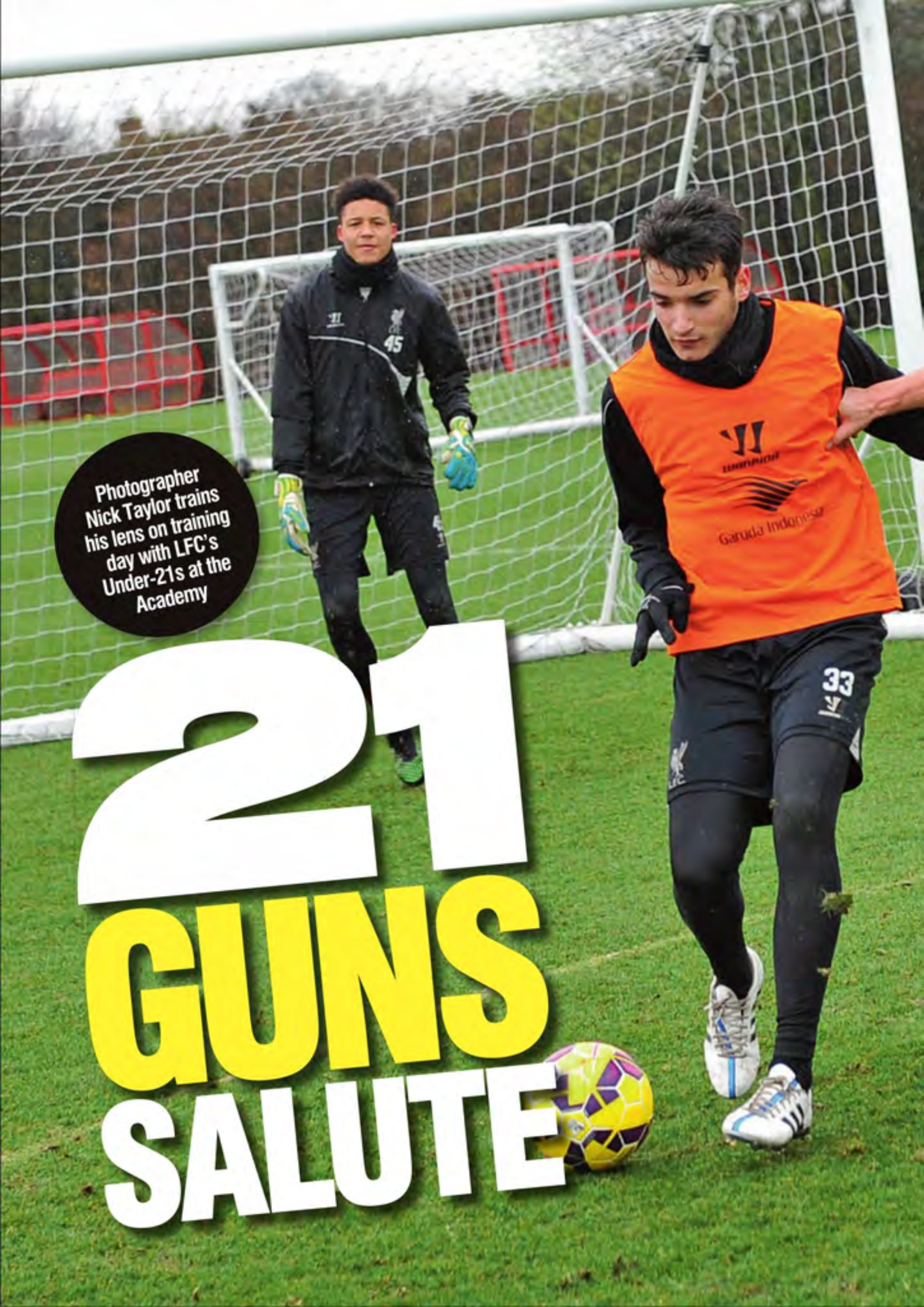


Get the book See the show

Mark Platt's book Cup Kings: Liverpool 1965 is now available as an ebook to commemorate the 50th anniversary of one of the greatest days in the club's history. Available now at Amazon. And on LFCTV don't miss *Ee-Aye-Addio: 1965 and all that*. A 70-minute documentary featuring interviews with key players, it airs for the first time on LFCTV on 1 May 2015.

21 GUNS SALUTE

Photographer Nick Taylor trains his lens on training day with LFC's Under-21s at the Academy





Holding midfielder Pedro Chirivella (left) is challenged by left-back Joe Maguire



Full stretch for LFC's
London-born goalkeeper
Lawrence Vigouroux



The lads and coaches gather round between sessions at the LFC Academy in Kirkby



Under-21s manager Michael Beale with young midfielder Daniel Trickett-Smith

Daniel Trickett-Smith and defenders Kevin Stewart and Brad Smith



Smiles please!
Daniel Trickett-Smith, Brad Smith and Lawrence Vigouroux

Academy director Alex Inglethorpe watches the lads put through their paces





Vigouroux shares a joke with the Under-21s goalkeeping coach Mark Morris

Manager Michael Beale, who previously worked at Chelsea, with players and staff



Left-sided player Joe Maguire is Academy ball monitor for the day!



Training sessions finished as the players gather their equipment



At the Academy there's a place for everything – and everything in its place!

Under-21s update

Four players from the U21 side have contributed towards Brendan Rodgers' squad for the first time this season.

Midfielder Jordan Rossiter made a goalscoring debut in September during a 2-2 draw with Middlesbrough in a League Cup tie that was decided by penalties. Fellow midfielder Jordan Williams also made his debut in the encounter and scored his spot-kick in a remarkable shootout, which concluded in a 14-13 victory for Liverpool. Williams finished the campaign on loan at Notts County in League One.

Sheyi Ojo and Cameron Brannagan have since featured on the subs bench without being called upon to appear. For the second half of the season Ojo enjoyed a loan spell at Wigan where he was joined by U-21 top-scorer Jerome Sinclair.

Jack Dunn and Kevin Stewart had temporary moves to League Two's Cheltenham Town and Burton Albion, while Lloyd Jones (after also being with Cheltenham) went to Accrington Stanley. With six games left to play in the Premier League U-21 Division 1 table, Liverpool were placed in second, four points behind Manchester United with a game in hand.

ISTANBUL STILL SINKING IN

A decade on: how those who played in the Champions League final remember what happened



"It is one of the greatest finals of all time. People will be talking about that game in 20 or 30 years' time. It sounds strange, but I didn't really celebrate in the changing-room [immediately after the final].

"I just can't believe how we won that cup. We had a similar scenario a few years before in the FA Cup final against Arsenal [in 2001] when we were dead and buried but ended up coming back and we did it again in Istanbul.

"I was going out there in the second half hoping that we weren't really going to embarrass ourselves more by letting in four or five. We didn't want it to be remembered as a final where there was a bit of an embarrassment. They got the early goal and we seemed to be pushing for the equaliser too early and they kept hitting us on the break. Jerzy's save from Shevchenko at the end of extra-time was unbelievable. I was just waiting for it to hit the net and it being game-up. I couldn't believe it never went in and I think that was the moment that I thought our name was on the cup.

"I don't think this final will ever be bettered. We can win the trophy again, but I think it's the way we won it that makes it so special."

Jamie Carragher

"These are the moments that measure you as a manager. The times when the players have lost faith, when their confidence is shattered, their belief washed away in a tide of embarrassment, disappointment and regret. These are the moments when all the work you have done over the course of a season, a career, bears its reward.

Those players who stood at the centre of that vast bowl, watched by 50,00 Liverpool fans, had not been sent back onto that pitch [after half-time] instructed to limit the damage or avoid further humiliation. They had not been allowed to think that all was lost. Half -time offered us just 15 minutes to convince them that there was hope, how distant; that there was a chance, however slim. We did all we could to show them that there was a way, that there was no reason to give up, to prove to them that we had a plan. And after all that had happened in that dispiriting first half, they believed.

"It would be too much to say that we had planned to score three goals in six minutes. We knew, though, that if we could score the first goal of the second half, we stood a chance. We would be back in the game. If we scored first, I had told the players, anything could happen. We knew that we could stop Milan, that we could right what went wrong in the first half. And we knew that we could hurt them too. We knew how we could come back from the dead."

Rafael Benitez





"The best moment of my life. Lifting the trophy as Liverpool captain has to be the best feeling ever. It's the greatest game I have played in.

"We were massive underdogs at the beginning of the competition and I'll put my hands up and say I didn't think we were going to go all the way. But we are never beaten.

"Milan had played the ball so quickly, fluently and cleverly during the first half that it took a lot out of us chasing their shadows because we could not get near them. We were lucky to be only 3-0 down. Milan's football was world-class.

"When I scored, it started to change. That goal gave us a bit of belief. What happened next was amazing: how do you find words to describe it? In extra-time I spoke to a few of the lads on the pitch and we were all tired. I was running on empty even with 10 or 12 minutes of normal time still to go and I admit I was thinking of penalties.

"When Serginho missed their first one I thought to myself again: we are meant to win this. I was down to take the fifth penalty so I was especially delighted when Jerzy saved from Shevchenko. The manager had asked me whether I wanted to take one and I said yes. When he told me he had put me on the last one, I thought: cheers. How can anything follow a game like that?"

Steven Gerrard

"I don't know how I did it. With that save [from Shevchenko's shot] in the last three minutes, someone up there saved us. Before the penalties Carragher came up to me like he was crazy, as always. He grabbed me and said: 'Jerzy, Jerzy, Jerzy, remember Bruce [Grobbelaar]. He did some crazy things to put them off and you have to do the same. Just put them off all the time!' He told me I would be the hero. I said: 'Okay, calm down. I've seen the video of Bruce and the penalty shoot-out loads of times'.

"The first one was missed and I saved the second. Then I tried the crazy legs for the fourth one but he [Kaka] scored. But a lot of other things worked out. It was the biggest game of all of our lives. We were in heaven afterwards."

Jerzy Dudek



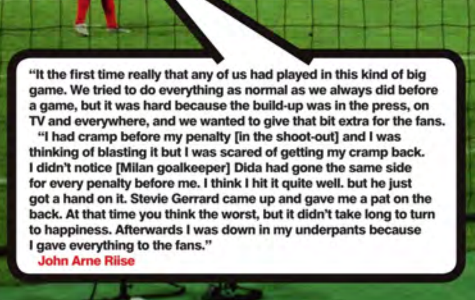
"I look at the medal now and again. It's kept in a drawer, not on show, but I know exactly where it is. It was my first medal and in terms of cups it's the biggest you can win.

"Before the game Rafa told us that someone else other than Stevie would take the penalties, so when we got one [to make it 3-3 on the night] I decided that I would take it. I missed the first chance and then luckily the second one went in. I didn't have time to think about the miss as it all happened so fast.

"In fact I can remember thinking that we should have had another penalty as I felt Alessandro Nesta fouled me when I went for the rebound. That was the first thing in my mind then I saw the ball hit the roof of the net and it didn't matter anymore. I just reacted as quickly as possible and it went in to make it 3-3.

"To be 3-0 down against one of the biggest clubs in Europe and then to be back on level terms within just six minutes was incredible. It all happened so quickly and was so exciting for everybody. Us, the supporters, everybody."

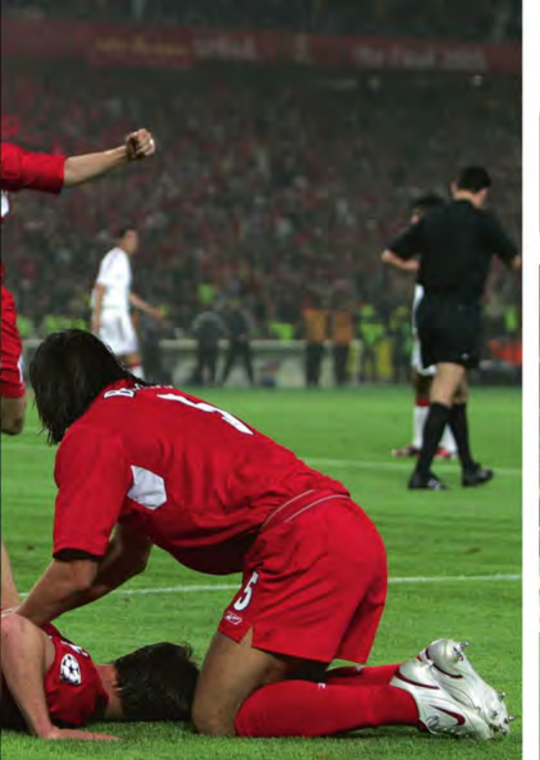
Xabi Alonso



"It the first time really that any of us had played in this kind of big game. We tried to do everything as normal as we always did before a game, but it was hard because the build-up was in the press, on TV and everywhere, and we wanted to give that bit extra for the fans.

"I had cramp before my penalty [in the shoot-out] and I was thinking of blasting it but I was scared of getting my cramp back. I didn't notice [Milan goalkeeper] Dida had gone the same side for every penalty before me. I think I hit it quite well. but he just got a hand on it. Stevie Gerrard came up and gave me a pat on the back. At that time you think the worst, but it didn't take long to turn to happiness. Afterwards I was down in my underpants because I gave everything to the fans."

John Arne Riise



"The greatest game I have ever played in. Especially considering we were 3-0 down at half-time and still managed to win. It was a special night and I think it was my best night in my football career. I spent three-and-a-half-years at Liverpool and won the Champions League. Liverpool will always stay in my heart."
Milan Baros







"The players were absolutely brilliant. From Stevie leading us, to Jamie and Sami at the back and Jerzy in goal, everyone was absolutely brilliant. The whole team was strong and we deserved to win.

"Coming towards the end of extra-time, Jerzy pulled off an absolutely magnificent double-save. It was unbelievable. He has always been good at saving penalties, so we were hoping it would go that way because the players were getting tired and we knew what Jerzy could do. He was great. We hadn't really practised penalties before the game. We'd taken a few in training every now and then, but it's not something we sat down and talked about."
Harry Kewell



"It's incredible to think it's been 10 years. It just goes to show how quickly time goes – a decade is almost like someone's career!

"I felt a bit of an injury in the first-half. You never want to come off, but it was the right decision because I wouldn't have lasted long. I was actually inside the dressing-room when I heard the sound of the first goal. You could tell the difference between the fans, so you knew it was us who scored. The comeback wasn't something you'd expect with the way the first half went, but it was surreal. That's why I moved to Liverpool.

"I guess I was a bit fortunate reaching two finals [2005 and 07] in my first three seasons in the Champions League. And that's why I have to give Rafa Benitez credit for what he can get out of a team – he was suited to that type of football and knockout competition."

Steve Finnan



"I've achieved something few players ever will. I know I was not the best [player at Liverpool at the time] but I certainly tried my hardest and I'm very proud because winning the Champions League is not something everyone gets to do."

Djimi Traore



"Even the neutrals will remember it forever. Because to come back from 3-0 down against AC Milan and then go on to win it is an incredible result. Even in a normal game this would be special, so for it to happen in the Champions League final makes it even more so. It will stay in the memories of the players and the fans for the rest of our lives.

"Every player dreams of winning the Champions League at some time in their career, or even just to be in the final, and I have managed to play in the final and win it. So Istanbul is definitely a highlight of my life and I think from a fan point-of-view the way the game went made it even more special."

Sami Hyypia



"This sort of fairy story could only happen at Liverpool. Only at a club with such a glorious European pedigree. Coming from three-nil down to beat AC Milan in the 2005 Champions League final was the greatest moment of my career and nothing can ever top it. What we achieved that night in Istanbul was incredible. On reflection I don't know how we managed it, but we did."

Djibril Cisse

"When I got back to the hotel I lit a huge cigar. It is the tradition in America when you've won a trophy. I had it all night and I kept puffing and lighting it up and it never went out. I did not get any sleep at all.

"I'm so glad I scored. I always felt I owed Liverpool because I have had plenty of injuries and I wanted to show the fans I am a good player. This was my seventh trophy with Liverpool. That's not bad is it?"

Vladimir Smicer

"The fans stayed with us. They were there, even when we looked out of it, and that is something that will live with me for a very long time.

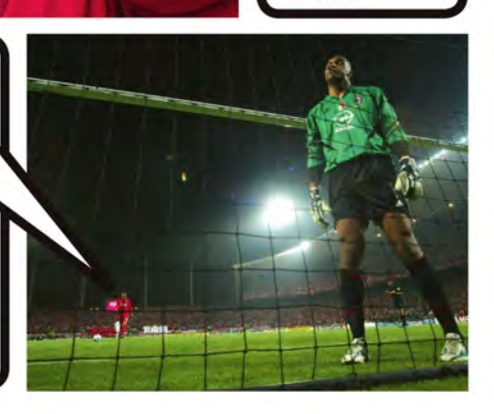
"We were all a little worried at half-time when we were 3-0 down because it didn't look as if there was any way back for us. But we kept believing in ourselves and I think we deserved to win. We showed our strengths many times that season and it was a fantastic moment for us all now. It was reward for all the hard work we put in that season."

Luis Garcia

"I was always confident –about taking my penalty in the shoot-out, that is. Rafa asked if I wanted [to take] one and I nodded. From that moment on I wasn't aware of what was happening around me. I don't know who the boss spoke to, or who didn't volunteer. I've heard that Luis Garcia wanted one but Rafa wouldn't let him. I must ask Luis about that. But I was, as they say, in the zone – completely focused on my job. Rafa came around again and told me I'd be going first. Because I was so focused I didn't know who was next. I was like a supporter looking to see who was stepping up each time.

"Regardless of which penalty you are taking, I always felt the most important thing was to commit. I never thought: I just need to hit the target. Instead I decided where I was going to hit the ball and went for it. The pressure of taking a penalty never worried me."

Dietmar Hamann




istanbul
Final 2005 istanbul

No time for losers

For the players, staff and supporters of AC Milan the unthinkable happened in Istanbul on the evening of 25 May 2005 – and things have never been the same since, writes Simon Hughes

EURO NIGHTS 1964-2014



The quotes from Andrea Pirlo's 2014 autobiography *I Think Therefore I Play* have become almost legendary. 'I thought about quitting because, after Istanbul, nothing made sense any more'… 'We couldn't speak. We couldn't move. They'd mentally destroyed us'… 'I didn't dare look in the mirror in case my reflection spat back at me'… 'I'll never watch that match again'…

Pirlo was in the team that earned some redemption in the re-match of 2007 when Milan beat Liverpool in the Champions League final in Athens. But the scars, both personally and for the club he left for Juventus in 2011, remain.

Next season Milan are unlikely to appear in European competition for the second year in succession. It is claimed that spirits and performances have been at their lowest since the club's humiliating relegation from Serie A back in 1982.

"I love Milan so the situation saddens me," Zvonimir Boban told the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper at the start of April, continuing like an old sage telling a friend something they don't really want to hear. Boban explained why Milan are presently a "mediocre" team, laying much of the blame on current coach Filippo Inzaghi, who scored both of Milan's goals when they defeated Liverpool in 2007.

Boban, the Croatian midfielder and winner of four league titles with Milan between 1992 and 1999, claimed Inzaghi's lack of prior top-level coaching experience is reflected by his tactical decisions. Remarkably, perhaps, for a club with a rich history in employing goalscoring number 9s – including Inzaghi – Milan have played most of the season without a recognised striker. Although Jeremy Menez has been the team's best player in a withdrawn attacking role, the approach has been unpopular.

Yet Boban admits too that Milan's problems run deeper. He speaks of a team that was allowed to grow old together without consideration for what would happen when they could no longer perform effectively. The Milan that lost to Liverpool in the 2005 Champions League final on penalties had an average age of 30, compared to Liverpool's 26. While Liverpool's remained at 26 two years later when the sides met again, the average age of the Italian side had risen to 31.

"It had long been Milan's policy to buy proven, experienced players and extend their careers through medical expertise at their training base, Milanello," says John Foot, author of Calcio. "Clarence Seedorf is an example of this. By the time he left Milan in his late 30s, his fitness levels were comparable to players at other clubs who were far, far younger."

But Milan's team gradually receded collectively when clubs had to become mindful of financial fair play. It meant many of Milan's key players either retired or, like Seedorf, moved on for free – without the club benefiting financially and being able to reinvest. The new UEFA restrictions meant Milan could not simply

respond by splurging vast sums on replacements.

At time of writing Milan were eighth in Serie A, 28 points behind likely champions Juventus. Their modest aim now is to finish above city rivals Internazionale, whose slump into mid-table has been for similar reasons.

The club broke the world transfer-record twice in the summer of 1992 when they bought Jean-Pierre Papin then Gianluigi Lentini. Now they are leaders in employing out of contract or unwanted stars. Even club captain Riccardo Montolivo has acknowledged that he and his team-mates lack the quality of the players who had gone before: "None of us draw comparisons with the past. They used to have sacred beasts at Milanello, legends of European football. There is a clear difference between that Milan and this Milan… We've failed to stay switched on and focused for 90 minutes. That's the difference between a great team and one like us which has only great players."

Transfer windows in 2012 and 2013 were significant for Milan when high earners were either released or sold. World Cup 2006 winners Alessandro Nesta, Inzaghi, Gianluca Zambrotta, Massimo Oddo and Gennaro Gattuso moved on. Out went those with Champions League triumphs behind them in Seedorf and Mark van Bommel, while star players Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Thiago Silva joined Paris Saint-Germain.

Despite the cuts it is thought that, even now, only Juventus and Roma spend more on player salaries in Serie A. The common consensus is: both Milan clubs will either need to upgrade or move away from the San Siro home they share with Inter in order to unlock commercial potential. Matchday revenue is down and because they don't own the ground neither Milan nor Inter can claim the kind of revenue generated by other clubs of similar stature around Europe.

"Bringing in Paolo Maldini might help Milan to regain their identity"



Jerzy saves Sheva's pen and the Reds are champions of Europe

Owner Silvio Berlusconi has charged his daughter Barbara with the responsibility of finding a solution and her plan is to relocate within the next three years. "Our own stadium would allow us to compete with Europe's more economically powerful clubs," she insists. "It's a priority."

The current malaise has led to speculation that there will be more major changes at board level this summer. Two years ago Paolo Maldini was linked with a return subject to a takeover. Despite former bosses Leonardo and then Massimiliano Allegri requesting he be involved, no appointment was made due to the legendary former full-back's difficult relationship with chief executive Adriano Galliani.

"Maldini might help Milan re-establish their identity," Boban has said. "That's what everyone connected to the club really hopes for."



Paolo Maldini: dignity in defeat

Just too much for one Milan fan

MILAN 05: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO

Entered politics after his retirement in 2012 following disappointing stints at Chelsea then back at Milan. Despite claiming he wanted to become a football coach, he joined the Ukraine Forward party, declaring: "This is the world I understand, the world that I want to stay in."



ALESSANDRO NESTA

After a decade with Milan, the Italian World Cup-winning centre-back joined Montreal Impact in 2012, aged 36, before moving to Chennaiyin in the Indian Super League in 2014, where he was signed by Marco Materazzi, once of Everton.



HERNAN CRESPO

The Argentine was on loan with Milan in 2005 from Chelsea. After returning to Stamford Bridge for a season, he moved to Internazionale before signing for Genoa then Parma – his first club in Italy. Now a youth coach with money-troubled Parma.



CAFU

A right-back with 142 caps for Brazil, he continued to play for Milan until his retirement in 2008 when, like Dida, he was 36. He visited Anfield last season as a guest of LFC after tipping defender Jon Flanagan to become "a great."



KAKA

Then 23, the Brazilian attacking midfielder was Milan's youngest player in 2005. When a high-profile move to Real Madrid did not work out, he returned to Milan and has since played for Sao Paulo. Having transferred to the MLS with Orlando City, he could face Steven Gerrard when the Liverpool captain moves to LA Galaxy.



ANDREA PIRLO

One of only two from the Milan starting XI of 2005 still playing. In 2012, 2013 and 2015, the creative midfielder was selected as Serie A footballer of the year, having helped Juventus to successive titles after leaving Milan in 2011. Pirlo is now 35 and remains an Italian international with 113 caps.

JAAP STAM

In 2006 the Dutch centre-back returned to Holland with Ajax, aged 34, playing a season before retiring. After three years working as a scout for Manchester United in South America, he became assistant at Zwolle and then defensive coach with Ajax where he remains.





GENNARO GATTUSO

The midfielder whose foul on Milan Baros led to Liverpool's equaliser has held three managerial roles since leaving Milan in 2012. After a spell at Sion in Switzerland he took charge at Palermo, then in Serie B, before four months with OFI Crete in Greece. At 37, he has since applied for jobs in Scotland, having once played there with Rangers.





DIDA

Brazil's first-choice keeper at the 2006 World Cup in Germany. He played for Milan until 2010 when he was 36 then returned to football with Portuguesa in his homeland. After signing for Gremio in Porto Alegre, he moved to cross-city rivals Internacional in 2014.

PAOLO MALDINI

Captained Milan to revenge over Liverpool in Athens two years later. Arguably the greatest left-back of modern times, he retired in 2009 just before his 41st birthday having played all 902 of his club games for Milan.



CLARENCE SEEDORF

After 431 games for Milan, he left aged 36 for Botafogo in Brazil. Two years later he returned to the San Siro where he became head coach for the second half of the 2013/14 season. He was replaced four months into the job by Filippo Inzaghi and has since worked as a pundit for BBC Sport.




M ig

The Mignolet Manifesto

The policies are in place to bring prosperity to LFC, keeper Simon Mignolet tells William Hughes

Following a sometimes tricky second season, Simon Mignolet's strength of body, mind and spirit have seen him regain the Reds vote.

During the mid-terms there was a brief challenge to his position but after regaining power, the Belgian has proven to be the safe pair of hands required to preside over Liverpool's defence policy.

The political analogies are not lost on Mignolet. The tall goalkeeper has a degree in political science and has had more than a passing interest in this month's General Election. His breadth of knowledge has also helped him stay focused on the bigger picture throughout those tough times, not least when he lost his place in mid-December.

"I know what's happening in the world and that is sometimes more important than playing football," he says. "Like for example what's happened in Nepal. Don't get me wrong, I will be as disappointed as any other player when Liverpool lose – that always hurts. But it keeps my sense of perspective.

"It means I don't lose that outlook and I don't lose touch with the



"I think it's important to know what's happening in the world"

modern society we live in because that can sometimes happen when you play football and you are only thinking about the game and everything that comes with it."

Mignolet has always been big on analysis. He has embraced the modern technologies that aid the assessment of each performance and works closely with goalkeeping coach John Achterberg in his constant quest for improvement. "We look at every single game win, lose or draw. The keepers always do certain things together with the goalie coach and we'll look at the positives and the negatives from every match to make sure that we keep improving.

"With every game being filmed, there are a lot of things that are picked up by the media and supporters where they will say: this player performed well or that player performed well. But most of the details we pick up in analysing those games are things that go unnoticed – that's why we keep doing it.

"With all the video footage and



The thick of it

you can learn a lot. I find that you learn mostly by seeing yourself in action. You can observe what needs to improve but you can also focus on what is good. We will keep on working like that. It is something that I always enjoy doing and I am sure it has been an aid to my career so far."

Simon acknowledges that football naturally tends to dominate his thoughts. At the end of the Premier League campaign he is due to join up with Belgium for a friendly with France ahead of their European Championship qualifier against Joe Allen's Wales in Cardiff on 12 June. With such a schedule, it can be hard to switch off.

"It's not easy! Last year I had 20 days off after the World Cup and this year it won't be many more. Football these days is almost totally year-round, so the small moments you have with your family and friends are times when you want to relax and take that time to give something back to them as well.

"When you go back to your house, football is something that you still carry

"Both my fiancee and the coaches suggested I was over-thinking"

with you – throughout the whole day and throughout your whole life. My fiancee is also from Belgium and she has got her life and career over here in England now too, so when we see each other when she gets home from work it's nice to spend time with her and it sometimes helps to speak about something other than football."

The no22's partner Jasmien also helped him during that sometimes bleak mid-winter. Taken out of the team for an indefinite period ahead of the game at Manchester United on 14 December, it proved to be less than a fortnight before he regained his place after Brad Jones was injured in the Boxing Day victory at Burnley. His fiancee offered some sage advice, arriving at a conclusion that the Reds backroom team had also reached.

"What she asked me was: are you over-thinking stuff too much? Co-incidentally the day afterwards when we met the coaching staff, they mentioned the exact same thing. That triggered something similar to a click in my head, something which told me: look we have to change something here. Obviously it helped that she and the coaching staff noticed it at the same time, so that was something we changed and it has helped my game and my performances since."

Liverpool's improved showing in the second half of the season has seen them climb the table and reach the last four of two cup competitions. However defeat in two semi-finals and in pivotal league games has hurt. Mignolet says the disappointments during his time on Merseyside have made him even more hungry for success. The last thing Liverpool want is a tag of 'nearly men'.

"I want to win trophies so that keeps


NIKE



Double high-fives with the Liverpool skipper

hungry for success. The last thing Liverpool want is a tag of 'nearly men'.

"I want to win trophies so that keeps you hungry, but it's not a satisfying feeling to be hungry. The other side of it is that the hunger has to be there to keep performing and keep improving every single day you go into work to make sure that you achieve the goals you set yourself for your career. Losing important games is always disappointing, but now we have to build again and be ready to go again."

With Steven Gerrard's departure, Simon and other senior players will be called upon to show their leadership qualities in the months ahead. A vocal presence on the pitch, Mignolet views it as a part of his role. "I think as a keeper it is already a demanding role where you have to be authoritative towards your players and the rest of the defence, so giving that lead is very important. From the moment I arrived we've come a long way in trying to organise the defence. I've always done it, but I still try to improve every day to make sure that I am being as commanding and demanding as possible – not only for myself but for the whole defence to make sure that the team is organised and well set-up."

Next season will also see the arrival of Belgian team-mate Divock Origi to boost the side's attacking options. Mignolet has been in regular contact with the 20-year-old and says he will do all he can to help Divcok settle. "I remember it when I was younger and first came over to England, it was important to have someone at Sunderland like Bolo Zenden who spoke my language. I'm always ready to do that with anyone who comes into the team, and obviously being Belgian it should help Divock.

"I've helped a few guys in the past because I speak a fair few languages and I know when you come into a new side and a new country it's not always easy to settle. It's nice for me too to have a compatriot coming into the team. It means that I won't be the only Belgian anymore so it will easier for me to fight my corner!"

Mignolet believes Kopites have every reason to be excited about Origi's arrival. "He's only young but he's also quite experienced, having played in Ligue 1in France and with the Belgian national team. He's got a lot of ability, he's quick and can score a goal, and he is willing to work for the team and put pressure on defences. He's got a great attitude so what more do you want? I am looking forward to when he is going to join."

Before next season though, Simon and his colleagues want to make a strong sign-off to the current campaign. From his recall at Turf Moor on 26 December to the win at Swansea in mid-March, he kept six successive clean-sheets in away league fixtures – a sequence that left him in the Golden Gloves running for most shut-outs. "There is still a big incentive between now and the end of the season to get the most clean sheets together because that will mean we have finished the season strongly. I know from experience that in the Premier League anything is possible and everything can twist and turn. That is why we have to focus on our own jobs and win as many games as we can. We defend as a team and hopefully winning that [Golden Gloves] award could see us get into the top four. To achieve those things would be a great way to finish the season."

Golden Gloves

2013/14 P Cech (Chelsea) & W Szczesny (Arsenal) **16** clean sheets
2012/13 J Hart (Man City) **18**
2011/12 J Hart (Man City) **17**
2010/11 J Hart (Man City) **18**
2009/10 P Cech (Chelsea) **17**
2008/09 E van der Sar (Man Utd) **21**
2007/08 P Reina (Liverpool) **18**
2006/07 P Reina (Liverpool) **19**
2005/06 P Reina (Liverpool) **20**
2004/05 P Cech (Chelsea) **21**

Political football

Simon says: "I've followed the General Election at a distance. When it is election time in Belgium I am more into it because I've been brought up with the system there and know a lot more about it. It's more complicated than here in England where you only have a few parties strong enough to get into power. I don't vote here but I know what's at stake and understand the the key issues. In my degree, I learned about the political system here in the UK, how the election takes place and how the votes are counted. It allowed me to combine distance-study with my football. But it isn't that after my football career is over I want to be a politician – I don't want to be prime minister!"





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OUR KID

Jimmy Melia, one of the original Bill Shankly boys, was back in town recently, and William Hughes went to meet him





Jimmy Melia was the boy from Scotland Road who went on to play for Liverpool and England. He played under Bill Shankly in the late 1950s and early 60s and was part of the team that won promotion in 1962 and the title two years later.

He went on to enjoy a successful managerial career, bringing both Aldershot and Brighton to Anfield for FA Cup ties. He's spent the past two decades in America and has helped set up an official soccer academy under LFC's banner based in Dallas. He recently returned to Liverpool for a week looking at the club's latest coaching techniques.

Monday 13 April 2015, Stanley Dock. In the vast, open-plan foyer of the Titanic Hotel, Jimmy Melia sits with a group of seven coaches from Liverpool FC America. The 77-year-old has just been chewing the footballing fat with John Carver, head coach of Newcastle United, whose team are based here prior to their Barclays Premier League engagement at Anfield a few hours later. Still a sprightly figure, Melia walks briskly to an outside seating area to pose for some photographs. "Not bad for my age – even if that is just 21!" he quips.

You had a busy week back in Liverpool?

As soon as we arrived we set straight off to Chester to see the [Liverpool] Under-21s game against Fulham. It was interesting for us to look at the standard in that age-group because in America we don't really get the opportunity to see what is coming through from the Academy and look at what is going to be there for the future. It was also a good chance to see the opposition and Fulham had some very good players too.

The following day we went up to the Academy to see how all the young teams from seven to 19 [years] practice, and that was good for our visiting coaches. For most of our coaches that came over, it was the first time they have been around the Academy at Kirkby and it was good for them to see the standards and observe what Liverpool Football Club is doing at youth levels. It was invaluable as we can now take it back and try and implement what we have learnt to help progress our teams. We also watched the FA Cup tie against Blackburn Rovers, went up to Melwood to see the first team train and then rounded off our visit by going to the Newcastle match at Anfield.

We've got some terrific coaches and people at Liverpool FC America and we're very fortunate that our owner, Peter Brody, really encourages everyone. He organised for us to come over and have a look at techniques and the way Liverpool are doing things because we want to make the progress in the US.



"As a manager I took things from Shanks and Bob Paisley"

How did you enjoy your time at the Academy?

Everyone there was terrific. Alan Moogan and Anthony Godfrey, who are in charge of the International Soccer Schools, and all the coaches made us feel very welcome. Alan and Anthony let us go on the football field and talk to some of the youngsters and do some work with them. I was able to walk around observing the sessions and I really enjoyed it.

Another highlight for me was seeing my picture on display at the Academy. I was very pleased about that because that will be there for the rest of my life, so it was quite a thing for me. It's particularly nice for the club to do that as I came through the Academy as such, too, even though it was the groundstaff in my time and quite different! Now they have this fantastic set-up and we took some photos to take back to Dallas with us.



Jimmy with members of his coaching team

How long have you been involved with Liverpool FC America?

I've been with the club for eight years and when I first started we only had three teams. Since then we've built it up and up to running more than 200 teams across the different levels.

Most of the clubs in America today have academy teams which start at six years old and run through to 11 when the children move on to what we call 'select' soccer. We then work with the youngsters and get them ready to go on to the next programme, high-school level. After that, the aim is to get them playing college football which is a scholarship scheme and important to us because we have the best college programme in the country.

Tony [Merola, an ex-pro with Wrexham] runs the academy and has nearly 75 teams and has done a terrific job. We then have 70 teams at select level. Armando Pelaez, who runs our college programme, does a great job with the kids. He knows everybody and when he phones people up they return his calls.

Coming to Liverpool to look at their latest methods is going to help us to get bigger and better. We've









now got teams in Austin, Houston, Carolina and Tampa and we're in the process of inviting other teams into the programme so hopefully the club is going to be busy in the years ahead.

Liverpool FC America are Liverpool's teams in the US – they are our partners and couldn't do enough for us. The Academy have given us incredible access and let us watch all the drills that they carry out while other people inside the club have been extremely open with us. It's been a fabulous experience and we can't wait to try and transfer some of that information to our teams and our programme.

The appeal of the Liverpool FC name is clearly strong in North America...

Three years ago I went to coach for a friend of mine who used to play for me at Crewe Alexandra. Liverpool were over there on tour. I went to watch them practise and there were 5,000 people watching them train. At the game there were well over 30,000 there. I don't know how many were Liverpool supporters but everybody seemed to have a red scarf. It was unbelievable.

Twelve months later Liverpool went on tour to Australia and there were 95,000 people at the match which has to be one of the biggest crowds for a game that wasn't a cup final. For me, Liverpool are the most popular football team in America and also the world. Everywhere they go, you get people supporting them. People love Liverpool because they know that they try to do things the right way, the Liverpool Way.

"The Academy has given us incredible access on our visit"

Steven Gerrard's arrival in the MLS will also be a big draw...

People are going to love him in America because he has still got enough ability to do exactly what LA Galaxy want him to do. He can play as an out-and-out midfielder who can score goals but also other roles too. I believe he could play anywhere on the field and still do well. It's going to be sad for him to leave Liverpool but it's going to be a new challenge. Personally I never really wanted to leave Liverpool. Sometimes I look back and say it could have been a mistake because I'd worked through the Second Division then the First Division but missed out on a lot of things that the team achieved. But while I took things from Bill Shankly, Bob Paisley, Don Welsh and Phil Taylor, I also learnt a little bit more about the game from clubs in different circumstances. From that standpoint I look back and think I have been fortunate to see other methods and ways of doing things during those times at other clubs.

How much have you enjoyed life in America?

I've been there 22 years now. At first I was never sure whether that was the right place to be. People told me: 'Ah, there are still jobs in England for you, whether that be some scouting, recruiting, television – there's got to be jobs for people like you in the game'. But I've worked in America ever since. There's not the pressure you get here. I'm still involved in the game at the age of 77 and it's been great for me.

I've been with Liverpool FC America for eight years and Peter Brody and Nancy Lane, who own and run the club, have been terrific. They want me to carry on being an ambassador for the club and maybe do some little bits and pieces with teams here and there so I'm delighted with that.

What are your hopes for Liverpool FC America in the future?

That we could send a couple of players over that are going to be great for Liverpool. When I played for the club it was players being recruited from Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Now it is a global game and you are talking about players from the rest of the world. That makes it difficult to produce players who are good enough, but I'd love to see kids that we produce in Dallas come through and play for the Liverpool first team. That would be one of the best things that could happen to our club and to the kids.

Living the dream

Liverpool FC America was established in July 2005 as an official partner of the Liverpool International Football Academy. It's since become the second-largest youth football club in Texas with more than 14 training facilities spread over 25 counties. A spokesman says: "Becoming the biggest isn't important if you don't become the best at the same time. As stewards of the Liverpool name we aim to carry ourselves with character, quality and tradition. Our motto is simple: 'Every player, coach, parent, concern, practice, game, goal and dream matters'."



HOME FROM HOME

Libby Stout is the Louisville girl of Liverpool Ladies and this is her latest column



The FA WSL season is back here in Liverpool! I am delighted to have returned to the city after a break in my native USA.

I hail from a big city in a smaller state: Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville is a city that reminds me a lot of Liverpool, as both have been strongly influenced by the waters they sit next to and a lively horse-racing history. Both cities also share a kind and helpful population of people with a vast appreciation for all things including food, drink, music, art and sports. I can genuinely say I am in a familiar home away from home.

Similar to most, football is what brought me to the city. I am a proud member of the two-time defending FA WSL champions, Liverpool Ladies FC. After winning the title in 2013 and defending it in 2014, we are now aiming to do so again in 2015.

Back in January, pre-season began and we welcomed four new signings to our existing Ladies squad: Nigerian international Asisat Oshoala, American defender Satara Murray, and two Norwegians, Line Smorsgard and Ingrid Ryland.

Asisat, better known as her self-dubbed nickname 'Superzee' or just 'Zee', is a really exciting young player to watch. Her pace is unique, and she


Libby kicks off

has a proven nose for the goal as she garnered top scorer at the 2014 U-20s World Cup in which Nigeria placed second. Off the pitch she's quite a character and regularly sneaks a selfie or two while stuffing a few Smarties in her pockets! But on a serious note I am excited to have her at the club and I see a bright future ahead for her.

Satara Murray is a fellow American from Texas and played at the prestigious University of North Carolina. She also has pace and is extremely strong, able to fend off any attacker at her centre-back position. Satara recently competed with the U-23s England team in La Manga as her mother hails from London giving her duel-citizenship. It is comforting to have someone here who understands and gets my American-isms. We regularly provide each other with much-needed pronunciation backup!

Asisat celebrates a goal



Finally, the Norwegians. Line Smorsgard is a savvy winger who has a great attitude to learn and takes everything on board. She is easy to get along with and a great team-player, always smiling and in a great mood pretty much all of the time.

Ingrid Ryland is a pacy full-back. She is an intelligent and logical defender with a great work-ethic and a hunger to actively challenge herself. Ingrid boasts a very sweet disposition but be warned – she is not to be trusted! She is typically scheming her next prank; therefore it is always wise to be prepared for anything (especially if you are unsure of her whereabouts).

Needless to say, all four newcomers have added a great deal to our squad, and are settling well on and off the pitch. They have very bright futures here at Liverpool and certainly want to be a part of a championship team.

Our core group, together with the new personnel, is working hard to win the FA WSL title for a third straight year. However, it has definitely taken us some time to find our feet. We struggled a bit through a tough pre-season, not getting the results we wanted. And I think that spilled a bit into our first competitive match, which saw us losing 3-1 to Birmingham City in our FA Cup opener. We then began the league campaign with a tough home loss to Sunderland, where we struggled to put chances away.

Our second game of the league was a re-match against Birmingham. We won 2-1 and finally put together a really fantastic team performance which many of us had felt was lacking from our season thus far. We fought for each other and battled for that win. After the match we knew we needed to keep that spirit and confidence.

We then played our third fixture away at Chelsea. We played a great match in South London, but as football tends to do at times, we undeservedly lost the match 1-0. Unfortunately I made a late error which allowed Chelsea to take the game from us. The important thing we took away from this match, however, was a sense of identity. Even though we had lost the game we all felt proud of the performance we put in.

Our most recent match, played at the back-end of April, saw us beat a talented Manchester City side 2-1 at home. Again we put in a great team performance and played with a fighting spirit. Now we have one game left before our mid-season break, which is designated for the Women's World Cup, and the league will resume in July. For the meantime our focus is on our fixture away at Notts County on Sunday 10 May. We will definitely want to finish this first half of the season with another crucial three points.

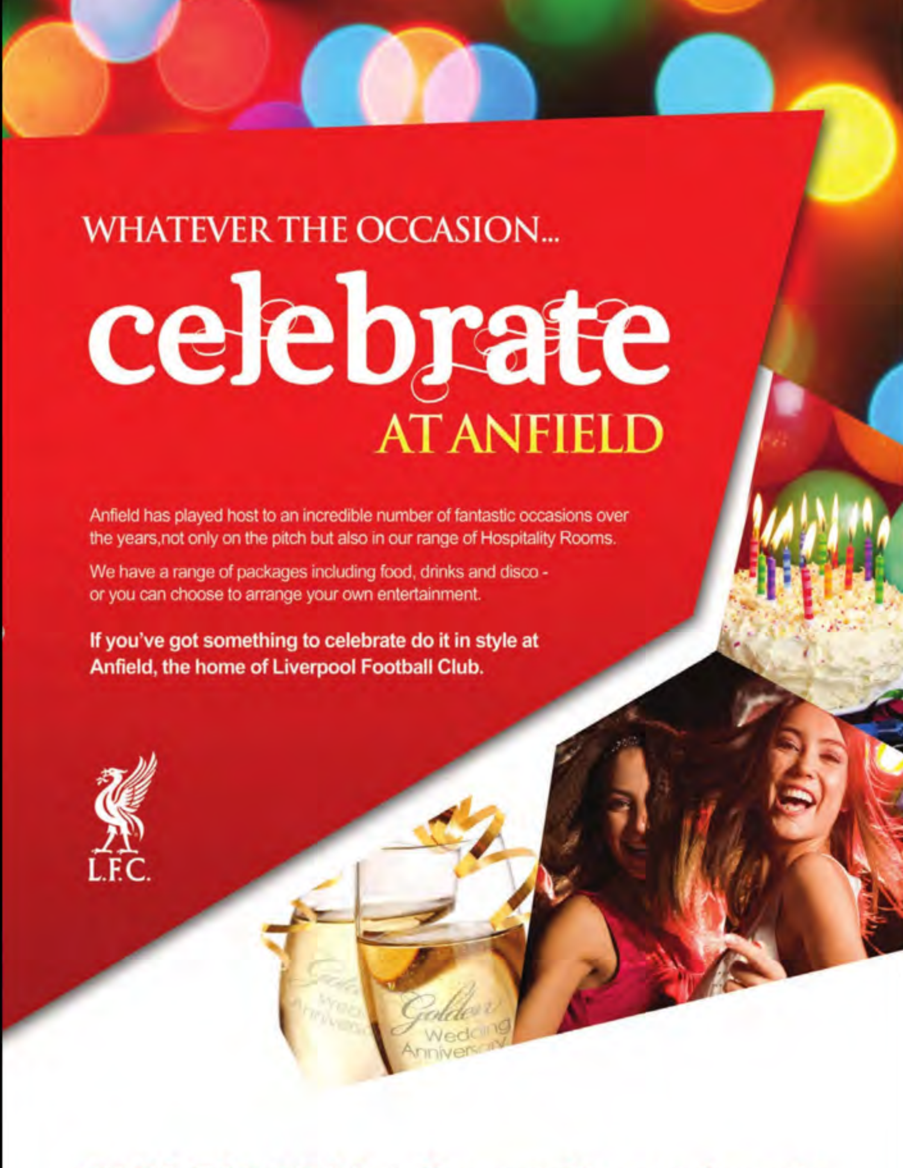
I do believe that our success in the past can be attributed to our tangible sense of team and camaraderie. You can literally see and observe how much we genuinely get on with each other on a day-to-day basis. I believe that we will continue to find success if we do not cease to trust and rest assured in our team motto: Together We Are Limitless. And together we will continue to grow, find consistency, and achieve our goals.

LOVE FROM LOUISVILLE

Libby's home city, like Liverpool, has a big derby – but it's the four-legged kind. Established in 1875 and most recently run on Saturday 2 May, the Kentucky Derby is a thoroughbred race over one-and-a-quarter miles, and known in the USA as 'The Most Exciting Two Minutes In Sport'. (Tthe Grand National, founded in 1839, is run at just over four miles). Louisville's most famous sportsperson is of course Muhammad Ali and there is a cultural centre named after him. The city's equivalent to the Mersey Ferries is the Belle of Louisville, a steamboat which cruises the Ohio River and last year celebrated her 100th birthday.



Main image on pages 66-67 courtesy of Louisville Convention Bureau



WHATEVER THE OCCASION...
celebrate
AT ANFIELD
Anfield has played host to an incredible number of fantastic occasions over the years,not only on the pitch but also in our range of Hospitality Rooms.
We have a range of packages including food, drinks and disco - or you can choose to arrange your own entertainment.
If you've got something to celebrate do it in style at Anfield, the home of Liverpool Football Club.
L.F.C.
Golden Wedding Anniversary

Ambition and patience can force the best young players into the first team

Neil MELLOR



I remember moving to Melwood to train with the first team on a full-time basis.

The opportunity really excited me. Previously I could only impress during reserve-team matches, but now I could show the manager every day in training that I deserved a chance.

Michael Owen, Emile Heskey, Milan Baros and Jari Litmanen were the first-team strikers but I wasn't intimidated. I couldn't wait to try and impress them. It helped that Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher were also there. They'd been through the same process as me a few years before, stepping up from youth-level. They appreciated how much it helped being made to feel a part of it all.

As soon as the session started, though, nobody was doing you any favours. The training was competitive. It was each player's duty to prove why he belonged. I felt comfortable with the standard. I knew pretty quickly I could handle the environment. And that is what a lot of Liverpool's young players must prove now.

You have to find a way to convince the manager you are worth the opportunity. You have to show bravery, confidence and strong character. You don't want to give the impression you are happy just to train. You have to tell the manager you want to play games; that the hunger and belief is there.

Towards the end of this season Cameron Brannagan has been selected for several matchday squads. Cameron will celebrate his 19th birthday on 9 May. To be so young and in and around the first team at a club the size of Liverpool, you need to have a lot of ability.

I've mentioned it many times before in this column but development in football is about balancing ambition and patience. Raheem Sterling was talked about for a long time before he made his debut. The same can be said of Jordon Ibe who played in the final game of the 2012/13 season and did not appear for Liverpool again until the Merseyside derby in February 2015.

"You have to show bravery, confidence and a strong character"



Cameron Brannagan can take the next step

Just because you've trained a few times with the first team, have been selected on the bench or have even played, it does not mean a great deal until you're in there week-in, week-out. This season, Cameron has captained Liverpool's U-21 team regularly. It suggests to me he has impressed at that level. Now he must be really keen to impress at Melwood – where it really matters – and progress from U-21 football to the seniors.

One player impressing away from Melwood has been Jordan Williams, who is out on loan at Notts County and playing regularly in League One. Having had a back injury early on in his Liverpool youth days, he has fully recovered and is now going from strength to strength.

Jordan has emerged as an exciting prospect this season. He's versatile and able to play centre-half, right-back and as a sitting midfielder. It is in the latter position where I like him the most because of his anticipation and ability on the ball where he is very composed indeed.

Jordan has certainly developed and progressed over the last 12 months and has the physicality to deal with facing older opponents. The fact that he was willing to take one of the penalties against Middlesbrough in the League Cup back in September says an awful lot about his mental attributes as well.

He will be better for experiencing senior football with Notts County and if he continues the same progress he has made over the last 12 months, his potential excites me. Hopefully it will lead to him getting more opportunities in the first team at Anfield.

Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33



The bit at the back for Liverpool FC's legions of fans at home and all over the world…









THE MONTH AHEAD

MAY

Stevie's swansong

It will be an emotional Anfield on Saturday 16 May with Steven Gerrard set to lead the Reds out for a home league game for the final time.

After 17 years of incredible service, the skipper is due to sign off in front of the Kop before embarking on a new chapter in his career with LA Galaxy.

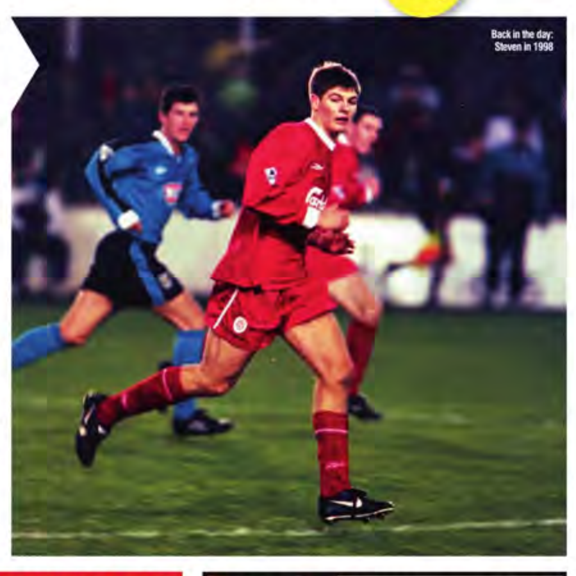
Crystal Palace will provide Liverpool's final opponents of the campaign in L4 and Gerrard will be determined to finish in style.

Liverpudlians will pay tribute to the man who has championed their cause on the pitch for the past two decades, while admitting he would have been sat alongside them had he not been out on the field.

The statistics will show him to be third in the club's all-time list of appearances with the captain becoming only the third man to play in 500 league games for the Reds in the stalemate at West Brom last month.

He also went into the month needing just one more goal to overtake Robbie Fowler's tally of 183 and move into fifth position on the club's all-time goalscorers' list.

As a banner recently unfurled on the Kop in his honour proclaimed: 'The best there is, the best there was, the best there ever will be'.



Back in the day: Steven in 1998



BIRTHDAY REDS

Tommy Lawrence 75 on 14 May
Javier Manquillo 21 on 5 May
Andre Wisdom 22 on 9 May
Nicky Tanner 50 on 24 May
Igor Biscan 37 on 4 May
Graeme Souness 62 on 6 May
Jimmy Case 61 on 18 May
Vladimir Smicer 42 on 24 May
Steven Gerrard 35 on 30 May
Adam Lallana 27 on 10 May
Howard Gayle 57 on 18 May
Cameron Brannagan 19 on 9 May
Ingrid Ryland 26 on 29 May
Ashley Hodson 20 on 5 May
Kate Longhurst 26 on 2 May



European Cup Anniversaries

42 years since Liverpool defeated Borussia Monchengladbach to win the UEFA Cup on 10 May
37 years since Liverpool beat Bruges to successfully defend the European Cup on 10 May
10 years since the Miracle of Istanbul on 25/26 May!
38 years since Liverpool claimed their first European Cup on 25 May
34 years since Alan Kennedy gave the Reds European Cup number three on 27 May


THE BEST
THERE WAS
AND THE BEST THERE EVER WILL BE
GERRARD
8

GET KITTED OUT

The Reds' smart new home strip for the 2015/16 season goes on sale on Thursday 14 May but fans who pre-order the New Balance kit from an official club outlet will also receive this free and exclusive t-shirt.*

More than 1,000 fans gathered inside the Centenary Stand at Anfield last month to catch a glimpse of the unmistakable red kit, the first to be designed by New Balance.

It adopts a chequerboard pattern inspired by the red and white mosaic formed when supporters on the Kop hoist aloft their Liverpool flags and scarves on a matchday.

Boasting a sleek style, the shirt for next season uses New Balance's dry moisture wicking technology, NB Dry, and offers ease of movement and breathability to keep players cool, dry and comfortable.

Billy Hogan, the Reds chief commercial officer, said: "We are very excited to be launching our first playing kit in partnership with New Balance, which is one of the world's leading sportswear brands.

"Like LFC, New Balance has over 100 years of heritage and it's fitting that the first kit launched as part of this record-breaking partnership celebrates the club's illustrious history and worldwide fanbase."

Simply pre-order the New Balance 2015/16 Liverpool FC Home Kit from any Official LFC Club Store or the Official Online Store and receive a free and exclusive t-shirt.* Supporters can pre-order in-store or online by visiting store.liverpoolfc.com

*** While stocks last. Terms and conditions apply.**





AWARDS NIGHT

LFC will stage its second annual Players Awards at the Echo Arena in the city on Tuesday 19 May.

The event celebrates the first team, Ladies and Academy players as well as former players and supporters.

This year fans are being given the opportunity to attend the evening alongside Brendan Rodgers, the first-team squad, Liverpool Ladies, Academy players and legends to celebrate the club first-hand.

Ian Ayre, the Reds chief executive officer, said: "Being able to share this special evening with our supporters will create a great atmosphere and I'm sure will be a very special night for everyone."

The accolades to be presented at the event, include Player of the Year awards for the first team, Ladies and Academy, Young Player of the Year and Goal of the Year in addition to awards for former players, LFC staff and supporters.

The evening will also feature a special tribute to Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, who will leave the club at the end of the season.

A full list of awards along with information on how to vote is available now at **www.liverpoolfc.com/2015playersawards**.

For ticket information, visit www.echoarena.com/whats-on/liverpool-fc-players-awards-2015.

SEASON-TICKET HOLDERS

As a Season Ticket Holder there will be times when you cannot make it to a Barclays Premier League home match due to holidays or other commitments. If so, don't let your seat go empty and lose out on the opportunity to receive credit against the cost of your Season Ticket next summer.

Use the online Ticket Exchange service to release your ticket. You can use this service as many times as you want during the season.

For more information regarding the Ticket Exchange please visit: www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets/ticket-exchange.



coming up

FIXTURE LIST 2014/2015

Date	Fixture	Score
AUGUST		
17	Southampton (H)	2-1
25	Manchester City (A)	1-3
31	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	3-0
SEPTEMBER		
13	Aston Villa (H)	0-1
16	PFC Ludogorets 1945 (H, UCL)	2-1
20	West Ham United (A)	1-3
23	Middlesbrough (H, COC 3)	2-2*
27	Everton (H)	1-1
OCTOBER		
1	FC Basel 1893 (A, UCL)	0-1
4	West Bromwich Albion (H)	2-1
19	Queens Park Rangers (A)	3-2
22	Real Madrid (H, UCL)	0-3
25	Hull City (H)	0-0
28	Swansea City (H, COC 4)	2-1
NOVEMBER		
1	Newcastle United (A)	0-1
4	Real Madrid (A, UCL)	0-1
8	Chelsea (H)	1-2
23	Crystal Palace (A)	1-3
26	PFC Ludogorets 1945 (A, UCL)	2-2
29	Stoke City (H)	1-0
DECEMBER		
2	Leicester City (A)	3-1
6	Sunderland (H, 3pm)	0-0
9	FC Basel 1893 (H, UCL)	1-1
14	Manchester United (A)	0-3
17	Bournemouth (A, COC 5)	3-1
21	Arsenal (H)	2-2
26	Burnley (A, 3pm)	1-0
29	Swansea City (H, 8pm)	4-1
JANUARY		
1	Leicester City (H, 3pm)	2-2
5	AFC Wimbledon (A, FAC 3)	1-2
10	Sunderland (A)	0-1
17	Aston Villa (A)	2-0
20	Chelsea (H, COC SF 1)	1-1
24	Bolton W (H, FAC 4)	0-0
27	Chelsea (A, COC SF2)	0-1*
31	West Ham United (H)	2-0
FEBRUARY		
4	Bolton W (A, FAC 4R)	2-1
7	Everton (A)	0-0
10	Tottenham Hotspur (H)	3-2
14	Crystal Palace (A, FAC 5R)	2-1
19	Besiktas (H, UEL, R32)	1-0
22	Southampton (A)	2-0
26	Besiktas (A, UEL, R32)	0-1**
MARCH		
1	Manchester City (H)	2-1
4	Burnley (H)	2-1
9	Blackburn Rovers (H, FAC 6)	0-0
16	Swansea City (A)	1-0
22	Manchester United (H)	1-2
APRIL		
4	Arsenal (A)	1-4
8	Blackburn Rovers (A, FAC 6 replay)	1-0
13	Newcastle United (H, 8pm)	2-0
18	Aston Villa (N, FAC semi final)	1-2
25	West Bromwich Albion (A)	0-0
28	Hull City (A)	0-1
MAY		
2	Queens Park Rangers (H, 3pm)	
10	Chelsea (A, 4pm)	
16	Crystal Palace (H, 5.30pm)	
24	Stoke City (A, 3pm)	

* LFC won on penalties

** LFC lost on penalties

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Liverpool FC Foundation is the official charity of Liverpool Football Club. We deliver a range of initiatives that inspire people from all walks of life to make positive change happen for themselves and their communities. Follow us on Twitter @LFCFoundation.

Learning curve

How Liverpool FC Foundation provides youngsters with the right skills

The Dallas Cup squad

The Liverpool FC Foundation Football College, launched in 2012 and based at the University of Liverpool's Wyncote Sports Ground in the south of the city, is equipped with top-of-the-range facilities to provide a full-time unique and innovative learning experience for 16-19 year-olds with a passion for football.

The College provides football training alongside a suite of academic qualifications, including BTEC Level 2 and 3 in Sport and GCSE Mathematics and English. In 2014 it helped 170 students to achieve GCSE, A-Level and FA coaching qualifications. Its team also finished runners-up in one of the biggest youth tournaments in the world, the Dallas Cup in Texas.

The Foundation not only works with and runs educational establishments but also runs a Youth Ambassadors scheme, now in its fourth year and providing 30 young people with a range of employment experience and training opportunities. Every week the Ambassadors take part in sessions on employability skills, customer-experience training and interpersonal skills tuition. They also provide assistance to home and away fans on Anfield matchdays, as well as working at many of the city's biggest events.

"Our education initiatives are a really important part of our work"

The Foundation's Reducate Centre at Anfield also forms an important part of the Foundation's education provision – offering inspirational and interactive education programmes as well as supporting a number of other projects.

Head of Liverpool FC Foundation, Andrea Cooper, says: "Our education initiatives are a really important aspect of our work and going forward we are keen to build on their success. Reducate is an example of this and we are looking to continue to work collaboratively with schools and other partner agencies to ensure a vibrant, sustainable multi-purpose facility that is central to the local community."

The Italian job

On the 10th anniversary of arguably Liverpool FC's finest hour, the one-man show Beating Berlusconi is back in the city this May – we catch up with the writer, performer and muse

The story: Kenny Noonan's stormy marriage to wife Marie and his journey to the 2005 Champions League final act as a vehicle for him to recount his decades supporting the Reds and the events that have shaped his native city. The team's European successes of the 1970s and 80s are interwoven with the Toxteth riots, the Festival Garden opening and life under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government.

In Istanbul, Noonan somehow comes face-to-face with another politician: Italian prime minister and AC Milan owner, Silvio Berlusconi. When the Reds begin their historic fightback in the final, Berlusconi loses it and the two square up.

Featuring Andrea the flight attendant, an irate Mancunian security guard, an unforgettable Ian Rush and 35 other characters, Paul Duckworth's performance has been acclaimed from Tipperary to Tromso.

The fan: Mark Radley, the real-life Reds supporter on whom the play is based, "blagged" his way in to the executive box of Silvio Berlusconi at the 2005 UEFA Champions League final in Istanbul.

The writer: John Graham Davies has written for stage and radio during a 30-year career as an actor.

The one-man cast: actor Paul Duckworth has filled a variety of roles on stage and screen, including a villan in Brookside and the part of Ringo Starr in the Beatles movie Backbeat.

Beating Berlusconi centres on the night of 25 May 2005 – how did you all spend that evening?

Mark Radley: I think all football fans remember where they watched that game or what they were doing when it was on.

John Graham Davies: I'm a Huddersfield Town fan and I can remember it clearly. I was driving in





Have you visited #theKOP yet?

LFC's brand new official social media hub is now live.

#theKOP is your one-stop shop for all LFC-related social media needs and gives you the chance to share your thoughts on the official website.

So, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram or Pinterest, you'll find all the latest talking points on #theKOP.






Let your voice be heard...



liverpoolfc.com/thekop

"There was this important looking guy who said it was okay to sit there"

the Lake District and had the radio on but lost reception when it was 3-0. I stopped to get petrol and as I walked in to this station in the middle of nowhere the guy behind the counter was loudly complaining. I asked him what was going on. He said the Scousers have scored. We got chatting and he turned out to be a Man United fan. As I was walking out Liverpool scored again. He shouted even louder. I would loved to have been there for the equaliser.

Paul Duckworth: I'm an Evertonian so of course I can't forget it. I watched it upstairs in the bedroom because the missus was looking at EastEnders. At half-time I thought: this is over. My brothers are all Evertonians too and most of my friends. A few texts were flying around. Let's just say none of us were upset about the scoreline. Then my brother phoned me and he was laughing about it. I thought: you've jinxed it now. I knew what was going to happen then – and it did.

MR: Obviously I was in the Ataturk. At half-time I was deflated so I went to get a drink. Through a set of glass doors I noticed some waiters serving champagne and decided to sneak in. Before long I'd had a couple of drinks and some food, and the players were back on the pitch. Rather than return to where I had been I decided to find an empty seat nearby. I did but was asked to move to another spot. An important-looking guy who reminded me a little of Don Corleone said it was okay to sit there.

Before long we scored. I celebrated but no one else did. I soon realised this area was the hospitality section for AC Milan. When we scored the second I was less vocal, but when we equalised I couldn't contain myself. The important man was not happy – he started shouting at me in Italian.

Armed security came along and handed me over to two stewards. They told me I could not upset this guest as he was the Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi. I thought I was being kicked out but they moved me to the LFC VIP Area. That's where I watched the penalties.



From left: Paul, Mark (and trophy) and John

Did you ever imagine that the story would end up on stage?

MR: No, it's very surreal. The night was obviously fantastic, but this has been a real bonus for me. I still pinch myself when I think my story is now a play. People have asked me for an autograph because they recognise the story. I'm very proud of the way it has been portrayed.

How long did it take to progress from the initial idea to being on stage?

JGD: I met Mark in a pub in Childwall [south Liverpool] and recorded our chat. From that point to writing, it probably took about six months because I had a lot of research to do. It was about making the characters really sound Scouse. I'd spent some time in Liverpool but I'm from Yorkshire, so that was a challenge.

MR: I was able to help John with a few words that a Liverpool fan might have used in certain situations.

JGD: We got the finished script to Jimmy McGovern and he was very supportive. He has high standards so that was encouraging.

Liverpool fans will obviously be the main audience – have other supporters shown an interest too?

JGD: Yes, Ipswich fans are the ones who immediately leap to mind. They loved the show and took us to an Irish bar in Ipswich afterwards. It was a great night.

PD: We did the show at a venue quite close to the Emirates and lots of Arsenal fans came along and really

liked it. No matter who you support you can identify with that comeback, so the story does appeal to football fans in general.

It's not just a football tale?

JGD: Defintely not. It's about the ups and downs of a marriage and how the passion of being a fan affects it.

MR: It looks at what was going on in Liverpool: the politics of the time, Maggie Thatcher, the Festival Gardens, the riots.

JGD: We get a lot of feedback from women who enjoy the show. They usually tell us: 'I was dreading coming along to this because I thought it would be all about football but it's not'. They really get into the story.
The appeal goes beyond the football angle. We weren't sure if that would come across when we first started, but it certainly has.

PD: The politics in the story was what surprised me when I first read the script. I lived through a lot of the times that the main character experiences.



There are over 30 different characters in the show – that must have been a huge challenge, Paul?

PD: Without a doubt it's the most challenging part I've ever had.

JGD: When I'd written the show I wondered how or where I was going to find an actor able to carry it out. I've done some acting myself where I've played a number of roles but never more than five or six. Paul plays about 35 and in one scene he does three at the same time.

PD: It must have been the years of talking to myself that helped me to prepare. I never counted the number of different characters initially because it would've fried my brain. But someone counted them one night during a rehearsal and when he told me I was shocked. It requires a lot of energy. When we did the first run of the show I was six years younger than now and I lost a stone-and-a-half. That worked out well because I was getting married at the time and didn't need to go to the gym. Now I'm a bit older so it might be slightly tougher for me. That's why I've been riding my bike in preparation.

"Paul plays 35 parts and in one scene he does three at the same time"

The show has toured the UK and Ireland and beyond...

JGD: A Norwegian actor and director came to see it in London and really like it. He translated it into Norwegian and they toured with it right up to the Arctic Circle. And the story has also been published in Italian. I went to the Rome Book Fair a few years ago and did some readings there. The Italian press actually compared it to a Ken Loach story which we were quite pleased about. Obviously the Berlusconi angle caught their attention. We've had some interest from other places too, such as North America. But we're just happy to have it on here in Liverpool again, especially at an iconic venue like the Everyman.



Beating Berlusconi is at the Liverpool Everyman on 21, 23 and 23 May (tickets £12-£20 from www.everymanplayhouse.com and the Brindley Runcorn on 8 June (tickets £12 from www.thebrindley.org.uk.

The producers of are looking for LFC banners to use in the show. If you can help out, please contact: beatingberlusconi @googlemail.com.

What the reviews say

No-one can write better about football than the British – what an irresistible sense of humour!
Milanese newspaper Corriere della Sera

This is the story of a great team, a little life, and the way goals play the soundtrack to many people's lives.
Neapolitan newspaper Il Mattino

I recommend to your attention this sparkling theatre monologue, devoted to Liverpool FC – extremely enjoyable, like many Loach films.
Italian national sportspaper Gazzetta dello Sport

A play that can bring out the laughter and tears in equal measure is worthy of any stage.
Liverpool Post

Hilarious and touching. This show isn't just based on a true story, it's based on thousands.
Liverpool Echo

WHITE HEAT

Think you know all about Liverpool FC in the 1990s? Think again, says author Simon Hughes



I had arrived in Maastricht, Holland by driving across Belgium through the night, accidentally passing into Germany because it was too dark and I was too tired to notice.

It felt secretive. Not that an interview with Erik Meijer is necessarily the exclusive that every journalist dreams of. But it meant something: being there, making the effort to travel, putting the miles in – getting to know your subject personally. Access should be cherished. This was Meijer's story. He was allowing me into his life.

Meijer met my expectations. He is in person how he seemed on the field: passionate, iron-willed and like his nickname, a bit mad – in a good way.



Mark Wright and Robbie Fowler before the 1996 FA Cup final

Meijer's statistical record during 18 months as a Liverpool was at best unremarkable and at worst, barely noticeable if you did not see him play live. There were 27 games and just two goals, both of which came at Hull City's old Boothferry Park ground during the first leg of a League Cup tie in September 1999. Yet in a vote to establish the 100 players that shook the Kop, he appeared a respectable 99th. His passion for Liverpool was real and it reflected in his performances. "I liked to involve the crowd," he told me before later explaining why "football without fans is nothing."

From the feedback to *Red Machine*, the book I wrote about Liverpool in the 1980s, I realised that readers were more interested in finding about those with lesser profiles: Howard Gayle over John Barnes for example; two black players from different backgrounds and contrasting impacts.

So while I spoke to Graeme Souness when he was back in Edinburgh visiting old friends, I met Nick Tanner at a pub in his home city of Bristol. Then there was Jamie Redknapp at his palatial home in Surrey, John Scales at an Italian cafe on Wimbledon High Street, Ronny Rosenthal in his North London kitchen, as well as Jan Molby, Jason McAteer, David Thompson and Roy Evans at different locations across the North West.

To establish a full picture of what happened at Liverpool in the 1990s, it was important to spend time with individuals whose stories were largely untold and interesting enough to stand alone while also simultaneously revealing the tale of the club as well as the society it existed in.

Many see the 1990s as both an inspiring, jaunty declaration and a scruffy clearing-house sale of British culture; the repackaging of Britannia – with added cool – for international distribution. Sky saw the potential in football. The Premier League was spawned. Matches became soap operas where attractive and controversial figures got the headlines. Football became something else.

Should it really be a surprise that the club built on the strongest foundations of socialism fell the furthest when the free market began to eat into the sport? Is it merely a coincidence that in 1991, the year the Soviet Union collapsed, the first cracks in Liverpool's

"It was exciting that so little had been written about the 1990s"



domination over English football began to appear? Liverpool's regression happened when not just football was changing but the world itself.

It excited me that so little was written objectively about the decade. I was also aware that the 90s prompts mixed emotions from Liverpool supporters. There is not the romance or tragedy of the 80s, nor the success of the 1970s. I had always considered it an intriguing period, led by fascinating characters, and I hoped they might feel safe enough to go on record now because their careers finished some time ago.

There were some surprises. John Scales probably spoke the most sense about what was happening at Liverpool during the 'Spice Boys' period. Scales, whose intelligence did not sit comfortably beside the boorish attitudes in the dressing-rooms of clubs he'd been at before Liverpool, reminded me of Michael Robinson in *Red Machine*, a closet intellectual who could not afford to let it all come out. Others warned that Scales was too polite for his own good and might not be worth meeting. Yet in retirement, he was far more confident talking about his experiences and perceptive enough to analyse better than anyone else what was happening around him.

I wanted to establish whether Souness was solely responsible for everything that went wrong in the early part of the decade and whether Evans was too nice to reverse the trend. So while also getting players that were best-placed to offer insight, I made sure I interviewed the pair of them. Managers are usually better talkers, mainly because they have more to consider. From both Souness and Evans, I came away feeling excited and could not wait to start writing.

Men in White Suits, Liverpool in the 1990s: the Players Stories, by Simon Hughes is published by Bantam Press.

THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE

Why one fan's prize possession is probably the best scarf in the world

Chris Morris has been a regular fixture in the Liverpool FC matchday programme for a few seasons now. He's not a player, nor a member of the team that puts the programme together – he's in one of the adverts!

Reds fan Chris has appears in the Carlsberg advert where he's pictured proudly holding his Liverpool scarf aloft. The scarf is actually a family heirloom and has been taken to the game since the early 1980s when his mum Joanne first started wearing it. She even had it draped around her when she got Ian Rush to pose for a photo during his playing days.

Joanne later met Mike on the Kop and they had a little boy, Chris. The scarf was eventually passed to him when he was old enough to attend games, his first being against Middlesbrough in April 2005.

Since then the scarf has accompanied him to LFC matches both home and abroad. Chris even wore it when he too met Ian Rush, nearly 30 years after ist first encounter with the Reds legend.

On 6 June 2015 Chris turns 21 and his mum thought that mentioning him – and the scarf – in the club's official magazine would be the ideal way to mark the occasion. We wholeheartedly agree!



Mum Joanne with Rushie, and son Chris with the Reds legend

RICHARD THE RED



Another Reds supporter who recently celebrated a 21st birthday is Richard Lloyd. Back in 1994 his father Colin registered the newborn for what was then called the LFC International Supporters Club, and he became the youngest member – a claim to fame mentioned in the matchday programme for a game against Ipswich Town. Two years later Richard again appeared in the publication for a game with Sheffield Wednesday. And more recently – in April 2015 – he was included in the Born and Red section of the programme that accompanied Liverpool's 2-0 victory over Newcastle United.

SHIRTY THA

Minotti Cheng from Hong Kong, a member of the Official Liverpool Supporters Club HKSAR branch, sent us this sensational personal tribute to the skipper. He writes: "I've collected Stevie G jerseys since 1998, and this is what I want to say to my captain: thank you!"



CAPTAIN'S VERSE

Paul Buxton from Walton in Liverpool is a lifelong Reds supporter and writes: "I've written a poem in honour of Steven Gerrard. It's a tribute to our captain and also a farewell." We were that impressed we felt it desrved a wider audience – it's on the opposite page, near right.

Meanwhile poet Ben Wilkinson, who's appeared in the magazine before with his Red-inspired verse, has penned his own paean to the departing skipper.

"With support from Arts Council England, the collection of poems I'm currently writing is dedicated to Liverpool Football Club's greatest legends," he says. "It covers famous names from Bill Shankly to Kenny Dalgish, through to Kevin Keegan and John Barnes.

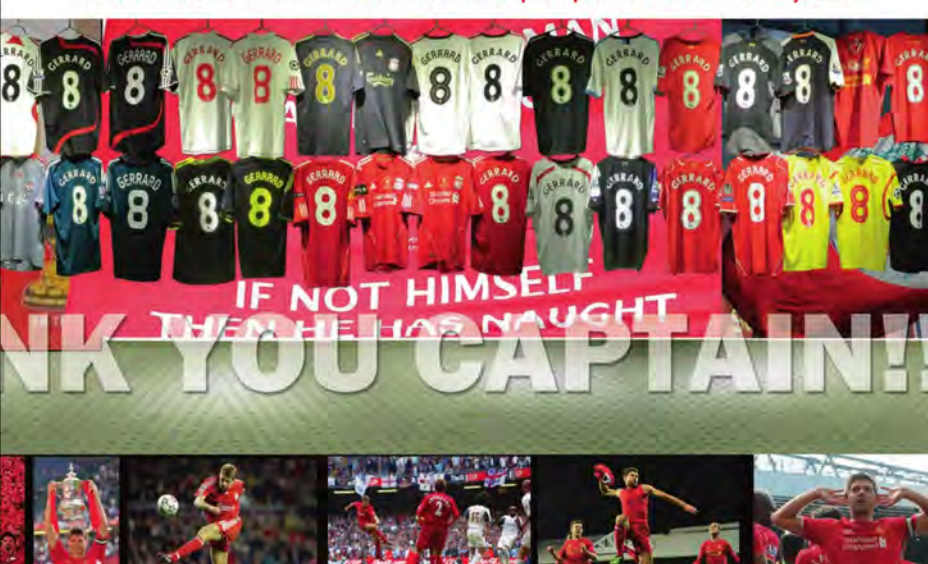
"In this poem about Stevie I just wanted to capture something of his character – his ability to turn big games around, seizing victory from the jaws of defeat. But I also wanted to show Gerrard as the kind of player who always makes you believe that, with enough hard work, craft, belief and persistence, anything is possible.

"That's why he has always cut an inspirational, honest figure in modern world-class football. It's why, for me, and in the hearts and minds of so many, he is a true legend."

At the Liverpool FC official monthly magazine we've had loads of Steven Gerrard tributes sent in from fans and well-wishers, and we'll do our bets over the coming issues to feature as many as possible.

WITH STEVIE

One Steven Gerrard fan from the Far East has amassed quite a personal collection over the years…



Captain fantastic, what's left to be said?
Our leader, the man – the best ever Red.
That talented kid from a Huyton estate,
He's risen the ranks – a Liverpool great!
As players moved on you proved you're a stayer,
No one can say you're not a top player!
He made the Kop roar, he pleased the masses,
Those quality strikes, those 40-yard passes.
Can't fail to mention that One Night in May,
3-0 down, we're not finished, impossible you say?
He kept the belief and used his willpower,
Not only his, football's finest hour.
He's given us moments of footballing pleasure,
Steven Gerrard, the memories we'll treasure.
The toughest decision, no stronger bond,
Liverpool's son is crossing the pond.
So farewell Stevie G, you're leaving your home,
We wish you the best – you'll never walk alone.

Paul Buxton

School kid knocking the ball to the bus-stop
From Melwood, years work till the call-up
One cold winter night: yours is the true grit
Us diehard fans can't help but prize.
A local lad done good. Wracked with nerves,
That first season on and under the wing
Of your boyhood club. Then you, stepping up –
Ten years a legend and the graft of games
Seized by the scruffs of their necks, each win
Fought for. Earned. We go again.
Don't let this slip...
The ultimate prize, almost within reach.
But no one foresees fate's cruellest twist.
You, the one-club man striving tirelessly;
As if, with belief, we might achieve anything.

Ben Wilkinson

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5 LFC Men's Istanbul 5 Graphic Tee
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For more details follow @LFCRetail on Twitter and Instagram.**

Steven Gerrard Instagram

@stevengerrard



26 April
Well done to our little magician @phil.coutinho for getting into the PFA team of the year.



23 April
Congratulating my mate today in training after he committed his future to the Reds @jhenderson



15 April
Releasing 96 balloons at anfield today alongside @pjags06. Gone but never forgotten . ❤



31 March ❤👌



30 March
Top top lad this fella 🙌
@11dirkkuyt



30 March 👍



29 March ❤



12 March
Game on 29/03/15…
Gerrard 11 v Cara 11 😂



27 February
Still a big help for me this fella. Love catching up with him #Hughiemc #lfc #coach #friend



21 February
Here I am with a few of the lads @atwinny Andy, Chris, Kearnsy and Dan #lfc#ynwa#kopites#8



17 February
Polishing my Adidas World Cups when playing for the Reds was just a dream #hardwork #dedication



17 February
Getting some help with my rehab @mamadousakho3 #onedaycloser

David PRICE

A love for LFC doesn't have to come with a local accent – as proven by Jordan and Phil



Henderson and Coutinho after the City home win

As the season comes to an end the Liverpool team is preparing for a different type of transition.

With Steven Gerrard moving on to LA Galaxy, there is the possibility of going into 2015/16 without any local lads in the team. It has been good to have had a local spine to the side for so long with Scousers and leaders such as Steven and Jamie Carragher. Of course we still have Jonathan Flanagan in the squad. Unfortunately he has had his injury problems, but he did really well in 2013/14 so hopefully he will come back into the fold and give us that bit of local stock.

Times change and you have to move with them. I'm sure we will produce local lads for the first team again in the future but in the meantime you have to get on with it. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what your accent is, and down the years players have shown you can still have a passion for the club without hailing from Merseyside.

In recent times one of those has been Jordan Henderson. For me, Jordan has played better when Steven has not been in the team. Whether that's because he has felt a little less pressure when he has not been playing alongside a living legend I don't know, but I believe he has produced his best displays when he has had the armband on.

The whole team has still looked good as a unit when Steven has not been available and that's important because they are going to have to get used to life without him.

Henderson is clearly proud to captain Liverpool – you can see his passion. Even the way he has got involved in little arguments on the field has been good to see as it shows his desire to stand up for the team and his team-mates. There is still plenty of scope for improvement in him, but he has already developed a lot since he came to the club and I think he is someone Brendan Rodgers can build a side around. Jordan has shown his commitment to the club by signing a long-term contract and I can see him being a big part of the club for many years to come.

Another player who didn't need to think twice about signing a new contract was Philippe Coutinho and it was really pleasing to see him named in the PFA's team of the year. For me, he's been Liverpool's player of the year. He has scored important goals and been involved in everything good that we've done. He is what people say he is – a little magician, a joy to watch.

Last season he was also impressive but like a lot of the players he fed off the Luis Suarez factor which helped to lift standards. I feel that he has started to mature and become his own man this season. When you look at transfer fees these days, Coutinho was an absolute bargain and at 22 years old he will only get better and better.

On a personal note, I now have a date fixed for my next fight: Saturday 6 June. I will be coming back to the Echo Arena which was always part of the big plans I have for the rest of the year. It's exciting to be back in the city and I'm really looking forward to it.

Follow David on Twitter @DavidPrice_1

"I'm sure we will produce more local lads but it's not essential"

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